2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1963) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

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13. Comments on the Mighty: Political Songs

The African-style song of social criticism has found no worthier subjects than the historic political figures of Haiti. There is no doubt that the African slaves used this art form to express their feelings toward the white masters as they had used it to comment upon the behavior of their own chiefs and fellow tribesmen. The worthy leaders were praised in song; the unworthy were castigated and their sins, failures, and social misdemeanors publicized in folk songs. By the beginning of the nineteenth century, slavery had come to an end in Haiti. The deep democratic sense of human dignity had outlasted the colonial masters and emerged tempered and sharp. The songs of criticism became not only comments upon political figures but campaign propaganda as well. They dwelt upon the accomplishments or faults of the candidates for political office. Friendly songs sought out every virtue, and invented others, in the man or woman being praised. Unfriendly songs lashed out and lacerated or poked biting fun at the subject, not even sparing his physical deformities.

Yet the political songs are more than statements of merit or fault. Cumulatively they are a kind of folk history of Haiti. No political aspirant ever went unsung by his peasant army, or unridiculed by his opponent's followers. The songs the people sang about their heroes and their enemies recall events and details that formal history has forgotten or ignored. The memory of the folk song is powerful and long. Some of the recollections go back more than a century.

History books tell us that in December, 1843, Major Charles Hérard aîné Rivière was elected to the office of the presidency, and that a new constitution was drawn up by the Constituent Assembly. The new constitution was an accomplishment of the liberal and democratic forces of the nation. It guaranteed certain civil rights to the people. It provided that judges be elected instead of appointed, abolished life terms for

2: Courlander B-8 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

presidents, and emphatically declared the army to be within and under the law.

The new President, finding his office without the prerogatives he had expected it to have, openly complained of the restraints imposed on him by the new constitution. He broke campaign promises he had made to the peasants in the south and stirred up antagonisms on every side. Finally, while he was on a military expedition in the Spanish part of the island, revolution broke out at home. His army was beaten by the Dominicans, too, which completely shattered his morale. He fled by ship to Jamaica, the traditional refuge of outgoing Haitian presidents. In memory of his administration the peasants sang:

Rivière Président gainyain xyeux vairon!
Li dit l'ap piyé l'armé Bélanton!
Piyé lévé trésor!
Piyé lévé trésor!
Piyé lévé trésor!
Yo voyé Lamham depuis Lowinsor!

La Constitution cé trouva Colombe
Quand yo voit pays soufri trop misère!
Li dit yo fait comme Henry!
Li dit yo fait comme Henry!
Li dit yo fait comme Henry!
Pou' fai sang coulé pou' rangé pays!

Colonel Déro soldat Diplaro
Marché fanfaron comme un grand fantin!
Li cré qui li té roi!
Li cré qui li té roi!
Li cré qui li té roi!
'Pagnol chasse li, li couri con chien qui prend frai charogne!

President Rivière was cross-eyed!
He said that he was going to pillage Belanton's army!
Loot for treasure!
Loot for treasure!
Loot for treasure!
They sent everyone from Lowinsor to Lambam!

The Constitution was founded by Columbus
When the country suffered too much misery!
He said he would do like Henry [Christophe]!
He said he would do like Henry!
He said he would do like Henry!
Make blood run to poison the countryside!

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175 643 66 The course of events leading up to Duvalier's election are difficult to assess. Fignolé, whom the army had permitted to serve as president for sixteen days during the interregnum, had been denied official recognition by the United States, suggesting that this country feared the implications of his political philosophy; his attempts at passing a whole new code of far-reaching social legislation apparently frightened the army, which removed him on grounds of "maintaining order." By the time an election decree was promulgated in August 1957, Fignolé was disqualified, and Jumelle had been forced to withdraw from candidacy. By election day, September 1957, only Déjoie and Duvalier were in contention, while Jumelle had gone into hiding. An attempted general strike, probably led by Déjoieiste elements, was stopped by the army, and Dr. François Duvalier was elected to power.

175 642 66 701 643 The Duvalier regime, beyond any doubt, has added something new to the Haitian political scene. To begin with, it must be stressed that Duvalier enjoys some popular support in the countryside as well as in the urban centers. For many Haitians, Duvalier epitomizes the return of the Estimé philosophy to Haiti, and it would be a serious political error to suppose that the present regime is no more than an elite-hating dictatorship backed by machine guns. At the same time, the readiness of the Duvalieristes to use force probably exceeds that of any Haitian government in more than a century. Its excesses, moreover, appear to break certain traditions of political behavior—for instance, the unwillingness to take familial connections into account when political revenge is being carried out, the violence committed against women and adolescents regarded as political enemies, and so on. The most important break with tradition, however, has been the gradual undermining of the army as a political force—a force created in the first instance during the United States occupation.

175 642 649 643 In carrying out its plans, the Duvalier government has played more creatively upon inconsistencies in United States policy than any preceding regime. It used United States military and economic power to consolidate itself, while employing a posture of anti-North American hostility in its search for other internal sources of political support. Most strikingly, it has capitalized on the deterioration of the United States design in the Caribbean region, both to exact concessions and to enhance an international image of itself as a stalwart "democratic"

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regime. That President Duvalier has been able to stay in power in spite of internal dissaffection, sometime hostile United States propaganda, a dire economic situation, personal ill health, and other woes, is a tribute to his political acumen, if not to his principles. None of this means, of course, that such consummate skill will continue to work; Haitian governments have a way of falling suddenly, and the Duvalier regime will probably not prove an exception.

Dr. Duvalier's success indicates that he has made certain correct assessments, not only of Haiti's social and political structure but also of United States policy with regard to Haiti. The occupation was notable for its failure to make any telling alterations in the economic structure or level of development of the country. Many beneficial changes were made, as Leyburn demonstrates, particularly in the areas of health and health services, communications, government administration, education, and transport (though the use of corvée labor on the roads led to serious abuses, and stimulated sanguinary guerilla warfare). But most significantly, the United States institutionalized the army and police forces. The ragged bands of political mercenaries of the past were dissolved; the officer-ridden army was transformed into a small, well-trained, and well-organized force. Eventual firm control by this force of weaponry, communications, and transport ended the era of presidential succession by invasion, turned the army into the major locus of nonelectoral, president-making power, and may have ended forever the possibility of an agrarian revolt against the central authority. Another political effect of the occupation was the importance it imparted to the United States ambassador, whose political opinions thereafter would matter significantly in the transmission of power at the top of the Haitian governmental system. The Duvalier regime has continuously taken full account of the consequences of United States interest; and its leaders have been able to watch the operation of that interest in the political events occurring between the fall of the Lescot government and the present.

In the view of one acute observer, President Duvalier, in order to consolidate his power, had to cope with three other loci of political strength in addition to the army and the United States ambassador. The business community, located for the most part in Port-au-Prince, had strongly supported Déjoie's candidacy during the interregnum; its leaders were mainly members of the elite, and many had strong

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throughout the country, the central administration remains in the capital; urban units are dispatched to the countryside at times, if any show of internal political resistance is sensed. TTM members also sometimes engage in struggles with each other over political spoils; but too little is known to analyze internal strains within this paramilitary, secret-police organization. The TTM has proved particularly useful for carrying out the murders of outspoken individual political opponents and for crushing draconically any threat of strikes in the Port-au-Prince business community.

Little is known of the antecedents of TTM members. While it is customary among the elite to describe these myrmidons as "trash," some of them are literate, have some education, vaunt a political ideology—a kind of nationalist-*négritude* mystique, with strong Fascist elements—and differ dramatically from the ragged, illiterate followers of the warlords of pre-1915 Haiti. In fact, the TTM lieutenants are a direct, if somewhat deformed, product of the Estimé regime, a decade of structurally unsound prosperity, a culturally nationalistic ideology, and, more remotely, of the United States occupation itself.

With regard to the army, Duvalier has followed a policy of careful attrition. While the United States Marine Corps "mission" was (probably unknowingly) serving to immobilize opposition, Duvalier began to change the character of the army general staff. In the course of less than seven years he completely revamped the leadership of the army five times; this process not only kept the colonels off balance but allowed the President to reward loyal younger followers—principally those with dark skins, it is said—with rapid promotions.

The relationship between the Duvalier regime and the Catholic clergy has been one of increasing alienation. At times members of the clergy stood high in the regime, two having even served as members of the cabinet; but not the slightest Church resistance has been tolerated. The low point in Duvalier–Church relations was the interruption of a mass by an armed TTM unit in downtown Port-au-Prince; leading members of the hierarchy later were summarily ejected from the country, and the Jesuit order was banned. Church power has waned significantly, both in the capital and in the countryside, as the regime has consolidated itself. Some observers believe that Duvalier is not so unwise as to aim at the complete elimination of the Church, but that he hopes instead to "nationalize" the clergy on some mutually agreeable basis.

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643 771 795 At the same time, the President has expressed his favorable interest in vodoun and is said to practice it; this statement, however, has overtones of malevolence that are not appropriate. Vodoun is a religion, though it lacks a centralized priestly hierarchy or administrative organization. Outside the elite, Catholicism in Haiti has always been colored by vodoun elements. The Haitian people as a whole invest no effort in distinguishing what is "really Catholic" from what is not, in their religious practices; in this regard Haitian countrymen do not really differ from folk practitioners of Catholicism anywhere. By its misreading of the piety of the Haitian masses, and its unceasing hostility to vodoun—quite different from the church policy in the so-called "Indian countries" of Latin America—the Church had failed to secure its influence over the Haitian people. In contrast, Duvalier's understanding of Haitian religious sociology has proved superior, and is consistent with the *authentique* ideology of the 1940s, though doubtless much more extreme in its implications.

642 871 467 204 661 Finally, the Duvalier regime has invaded such institutions as the National University and the trade unions, and maintains close surveillance over any individuals it regards as politically suspicious. Loyalty oaths are required at the university; a public press no longer exists; the unions, never strong, are now entirely powerless. But it should be clear from this description of the Duvalier regime that repression is not the key to Duvalier power so much as the means for perpetuating that power under Haitian conditions. The key to Duvalier power is to be found instead in the structure of Haitian society, in the social history of the past two decades, and in the policy of the United States, weakened by its inescapable preference for "stability" over "radicalism." In his own way, President Duvalier is as radical as he can be; but he is no Castro. It is now an open secret that Haiti's support for sanctions against Cuba approved at Punta del Este was matched by economic concessions from the United States; that the Marines, knowingly or not, immobilized anti-Duvalier opposition in a period when its supporters could be picked off, driven into exile, or jailed; that the official Duvalier offer of Môle St. Nicholas to the United States as a substitute for Guantánamo, though irrelevant, was warmly reassuring to some North American political thinkers; and that Duvalier, while he employs considerable "blackmail diplomacy" in his dealings with the United States and is now out of favor, is still considered "reliable" in that most important respect.

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Nor is it sufficient to label *Duvalierisme* "pathological" or "paranoid." The roots of this ideology are to be found in Haiti, not elsewhere; its supporters are the product of Haitian times and ideas; and their social identity, while not entirely clear, would probably pose few enigmas if enough data were available.* In order to make clear these assertions, however, it is necessary to look again at Haitian society, the Haitian society Leyburn has described so well, and to reexamine the terms that have been used by him and by others to describe it.

Though the societies of the Caribbean Sea differ significantly from each other, many of them share certain general historical experiences. Unlike the colonial areas of the Old World, these islands were largely populated from abroad, and in this regard they resemble the Atlantic lowland areas of mainland America. However, the colonial history of the islands meant that they would long remain the instruments of policy formulated in foreign capitals. Jamaica, Puerto Rico, and other islands were, during most of their postconquest history, the outposts of far-flung colonial empires, and the design of their societies was conditioned by this dependence and subjugation. As "plantation islands," their agriculture, demography, mode of settlement, and social structure were attuned to metropolitan needs and objectives. Unlike most of Africa and Asia, the Antilles lost their native populations almost entirely, owing to enslavement, overwork, disease, and war, early in the era of conquest and settlement. There remained the vestiges of native traditions, assimilated into the new, growing cultures of the postconquest period. The Indians themselves, wherever they were able to survive, were also assimilated through interbreeding with Old World migrants.

The newcomers came from Europe, Africa, and Asia, bringing with them what they could of their ancestral traditions, but never able to transfer their social heritages as intact bodies of belief and behavior. Hence the cultures of the new Caribbean societies were built up out of elements originating in many different places, while their social forms took shape under conditions of colonial control. The peoples of the islands were able to maintain some continuities with

* One interpreter of the Haitian political scene (Bastien, 1960:845–48) has suggested that Leyburn's analysis of Haitian society as a "two-caste" system greatly influenced local political thinking by strengthening one idea: "the black intellectual must regain political power for the benefit of the country's majority."

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same century in which Haiti withdrew. The yeomanry of Haiti in the nineteenth century was hence able to develop a traditionalism of unusual firmness and persistence.

This traditionalism, however, has had a high price. The economic productivity of the rural cultivator has not risen; it can be argued convincingly that poor land use, erosion, and population growth have meant lower levels of consumption for the common people in 1966 than obtained a hundred years or more ago. The rural masses, though overwhelmingly consisting of landholders, have been unable to break out of a stagnation that is economic as well as cultural. Such stasis has been based to some extent on the limited responsiveness of the rural folk to outside stimulus. But also important in maintaining the past is the national institutional system that took on its characteristic shape after 1804, and under which the rural masses still live. That system, the origins of which Leyburn has examined and assessed with such care, is controlled, as we have seen, by a numerically small segment of the national population that is markedly distinct from the yeomanry itself.

The nature and internal differentiation of the elite needs much more study, though it seems clear already that it is by no means a single solidary class embracing all but the yeomen. Whatever the structure of the elite, the relationship between the yeomen on the one hand and the real holders of power on the other must be understood if one is to understand Haiti. The yeoman is defined in terms of the elite; he is dependent upon it and subject to it. This is what is meant when it is said that the yeomanry, like the elite, forms only a part-society. Yet without the yeomen, there would be no elite. The elite live by controlling and taxing the rural masses, and find their sustenance and their power in rural productivity. Elite and yeomen, then, are bound together in unequal but interdependent relationships in Haiti as they are in other less developed societies of a similar kind. In such cases, the political role of the yeomanry is usually minor, and few opportunities may arise for the expansion of its political strength. If the yeomanry fails to increase its productivity in ways that enable it to control more of its own surpluses, its role in affecting national political decisions may grow narrower rather than wider, and this ominous possibility has become a worldwide phenomenon. It becomes more intensified wherever industry and trade grow, unaccompanied by parallel growth in yeoman productivity or in new and more widely representative national institutions.

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That the separateness of yeomanry and elite had visible and sociologically important expression in physical type in Haiti was a clear consequence of the history of that country. But the traditional preponderant light skins at the top of the structure and the preponderant darkness at its base are less important than the domination of the total structure, and of the institutional means for changing it, by a mere fraction of the national population. It is the *power* of the elite which has mattered through time; its physical appearance has been only a historically derived expression of that power. Such a balance of politically weak masses against numerically sparse power holders is common, perhaps particularly in the "less developed world"; but each such case has certain special characteristics. Haiti's special nature is not simply in its being a yeoman country, and one in which a small group dominates the mass. As a rural, agrarian, unindustrialized, politically sovereign, and quasi-capitalistic country, Haiti shares much with other lands; but in each regard its own particularity needs to be assessed.

The rurality of Haiti is extreme, not simply because there are no concentrations of population in excess of 25,000 except for Port-au-Prince and Cap Haïtien but also because towns of intermediate size are few in number, and the urban concentrations in the country's two cities are substantially of relatively recent rural origin. Port-au-Prince dominates the Republic in all of its economic, political, and social activities. Furthermore, the rural towns have been losing to the capital, not gaining from it. Until the United States occupation, the larger towns of the coast, such as Jérémie, Jacmel, and St. Marc, were united economically with each other, and to some extent with the capital, by a lively coastwise shipping system, and the inland towns were tributary to those of the coast. The growth of inland transport during the occupation strengthened the interior towns while coastwise shipping declined, but the capital grew even more important as the sole economic center of the Republic. Since the 1940s, the rapid deterioration of the road system has left both inland and coastal towns enfeebled; only Port-au-Prince has remained strong.

The dominion of Port-au-Prince is firm, and there is no focus of power in the countryside that can counteract it. Those few foreign enterprises in Haiti that base themselves outside the capital city use local port facilities (e.g. Miragoâne for Reynolds Aluminum, Cap Haïtien for the sisal plantations of the north) and do not affect the development of the interior transport.

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development of interior transport. The only passable roads in the Republic run from Aux Cayes in the south to the capital, and from Cap Haïtien in the north to the capital. Transport and communications simply symbolize the power that Port-au-Prince wields, since the same circumstances characterize all national institutional arrangements. Thus Haiti is an extreme example of urban domination, even though its urban population is a fraction of the national total. The consequence has been to keep most of the rural folk cut off from the apparatus that effects national decisions and shapes national policy. Haiti's national legislature, never important in limiting presidential power, is less so today than ever; at best, it had only represented the interests of provincial towns as opposed to the capital, and never the interests of the mass of country people.

The local military and judiciary officials possess the formal authority vested in them by the state, and their power is very considerable. Few local people would dare challenge their decisions, and the devices for appeal against arbitrary exercise of authority are few. Admittedly, at the lowest local level the *chef de section*—who is traditionally appointed by the captain of the military in the *commune* center and is himself a yeoman—is subject to some genuine restraint by local inhabitants. Jean Comhaire-Sylvain (1955:620–24) has argued convincingly that the people of a community are capable of insisting on democratic procedure in those matters requiring decision that come to the attention of local authority. But such decisions have little or nothing to do with larger issues. The yeomanry cannot directly make its wishes felt in national politics; and national politics are conducted almost without reference to the aspirations of the rural masses. It is precisely in the separateness of local life from the mainstream of national decision-making that the political impotence of the yeomanry is demonstrated.

Haiti's agrarian nature cannot be expressed simply by saying it is a rural and yeoman country. Haiti does not have a "land problem," as that phrase is conventionally applied to Latin America. It does, it is true, suffer from land shortage, inasmuch as too little land is worked at too low a level of productivity and must feed too many mouths. But a very substantial proportion of the rural masses owns land, or has regular access to it. It is true that most land is held in small plots and without clear title. But those persons who own no land or who lack land to work are proportionally fewer than in any other Carib-

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The major effect of the North

American tenure seems to have been to make possible a much more telling centralism in political control than had been operative in Haiti at any time since the fall of the Christophe regime; and the consequences of this change are still being felt.

Small-scale rural cultivators are famous for their tendency to confine their consumption to culturally conventionalized levels—that is, to live as their predecessors lived before them. Though they are involved in commercial spheres larger than the communities in which they live, they seek to limit that involvement and to maintain their cash expenditures at a low level. It is in this sense that Haiti might be called a "quasi-capitalistic" society. To put it another way, yeomen of this sort do not seek to change or to expand their production—rather, they aim to conserve a way of life set by tradition. The ideology of resistance to social and cultural change is one of the major obstacles to development; but it would be rash to damn such an ideology without reflection. In Haiti, for instance, there has long been pressure upon the rural masses to expand their production of coffee, the major export crop. However, this pressure has not been accompanied by any serious grass-roots attempt to improve coffee production or to offer genuine incentives to the cultivators. The yeomanry has no assurance at all that any expansion of effort will lead to gains *for them*; and they are little prepared to invest such effort merely because they are told that it will be good for Haiti. In fact, it is likely that the production of subsistence crops has expanded in recent years at the cost of coffee production, for the yeoman knows that he can at least be sure of eating and of selling locally such crops as maize, sorghum, and yams, regardless of what may happen in Port-au-Prince or to the world coffee market. This view, combined with the yeoman's painfully acquired distrust of those who prate at length concerning his welfare, has meant a virtual stagnation of agricultural export production, even though the whole land quite literally depends on this production in order to progress.

The effect of this rural resistance is to create an apparent very sharp difference in goals between countryman and bureaucrat. It is perfectly understandable that the countryman should fail to see the connection between heightened coffee production and a higher level of public welfare and social services. His experiences hardly persuade him that it is his surplus-producing capacity that underlies the kind and quality of public institutions with which the state provides him.

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880
457 country. The complete enfeeblement of tourism has also led to some
445 migration and to an accompanying decline of services and service
668 "industries" in the capital. These losses have surely hurt Haiti and
642 have damaged its chances for growth as well as its capacity to main-
66 tain the health, education, and morale of its people. It is not clear,
167 however, to what extent such changes may have produced a negative political reaction to the Duvalier regime. Urban support for Dr. Duvalier appears to have come from some intellectuals, from some army officers, and from portions of the urban lower classes; but numerically most important were those low-paid but literate and aspiring wage-earners whom the Comhaire-Sylvains (1959) refer to as "Class III" members. These observers have stressed that the Class III group consisted mainly of industrial employees, those engaged in food-processing, hotel services, workshops, and the like. It was this group that the Comhaire-Sylvains credited with the Duvalier victory in 1957, pointing out in addition that "in the small country towns almost all officials, both civil and military, and traders, seemed to belong to this class" (p. 185). If the economic crisis that has gripped Haiti in recent years severely affects the position of this class, the political situation will reflect as much. But the ideology of Class III members—so far as it can be inferred at all—would suggest that one Duvalier may merely be replaced by another. At the same time, the depopulation of those groupings whose members might have led a qualitatively different kind of opposition, during the period of tenure of the United States Marine Corps Mission to Duvalier, may have indefinitely postponed the opportunity for creating a genuinely new political direction.

66 To state it another way, there are no signs at this time that the re-
178 gime in power will be pulled down by any organized Haitian opposition. More important, since regimes resting on a narrow popular base have a way of falling without change, there is no indication that within Haiti's present national institutional structure, a genuine opposition to Duvalier-type governments can take shape. This means that even if regime should follow regime in rapid succession, there is little reason to expect that any of them could effect fundamental changes in Haitian society. If such an interpretation is correct, it presupposes an internal equilibrium or stasis so strong that no force for change in half a century has been able to make a politically significant difference.

114 This pessimistic view is supported by what is known at this time

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FOREWORD

THE United States, embarked upon a policy of good neighborliness toward the other countries of the Western Hemisphere, is beginning to improve its acquaintance with the republics to the south. Most of its efforts at present are directed toward an understanding of the large and important powers, such as Mexico, Brazil, and Argentina, which, because of their size and resources, are potentially our greatest allies—or, if we fail in our policies, our sources of greatest danger. There are, however, twenty republics to the south of us, many of them small. A truly good neighbor does not ignore near-by families who are lacking in wealth, even those who are known to differ among themselves.

Of the twenty Latin-American republics, the second smallest is Haiti. The United States was only twenty years old when the people of this little country (which, for all its diminutive size, had been France's wealthiest colony of the eighteenth century) fought their own war of independence, and in 1804 founded the second free state in the hemisphere. Haiti has many claims upon the attention of the United States: its war against France in 1802–3 was at least a contributing factor in Napoleon's willingness to sell Louisiana to this country; it was the first independent Negro state in the modern world; its foreign policy has long been intertwined with our own; finally, the nineteen-year American Occupation of the country has brought us into an even closer relationship with Haiti than independent factors could produce.

When the country was young there was a spate of books trying to answer the question whether a nation ruled by blacks could long endure. In more recent years, works on the Antillean republic have generally dealt with single phases of its life, as for example its political relations with the United States, or its "Voodoo" practices. There is, however, no connected story of the growth of its social institutions out of the backgrounds of slavery and French colonial life, or of the slow shaping of these institutions through the nineteenth century. It is this growth which the present volume undertakes to describe. Political history has been introduced only so far as necessary to provide the convenient pegs upon which most of us are accus-

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565 *caste* is the only word to describe the effective separation of aristocrats from the masses. The caste system is a vivid fact, for it regulates a person's profession, speech, religion, marriage, family life, politics, clothes, social mobility—in short, his whole life from cradle to grave.

175 Haiti won its freedom from the France of Napoleon in 1804,
648 becoming thus the second independent state in the Western Hemisphere. It had been during the eighteenth century France's most prosperous colony, its wealth depending upon slavery and the plantation system. With the whites driven out, social distinctions which
565 actually had their roots in colonial times began immediately to
642 develop among the people, all of whom had some proportion of African blood in their veins. During the course of the next century the criteria for aristocracy slowly assumed recognizable form, so that now even the most casual observer is aware that Haiti cannot by any stretch of the imagination be called a democratic country, with an open class system. The two castes are the élite and the masses. They are as different as day from night, as nobleman from peasant; and they are as separate as oil and water. The élite are generally reckoned
[162] to compose at the outside not more than three per cent of the population.

565 The élite do not work with their hands. This is the cardinal rule of
463 Haitian society. Upon it rests the whole economic structure of the country, and to this the course of national history has led. All the
[461] professions, most governmental and military offices, and the large business enterprises are effectively closed to young men of the masses. Indeed, so completely accepted are caste rules, so practically difficult would it be for peasant youths to acquire the money and education necessary for such careers, that at birth a boy's future place in economic life is, within narrow limits, already predetermined. For the élite, law is the most popular of the professions, partly because it is the quickest avenue of approach to high political office; government, in turn, is the only career which can make a man rich within a few years. Next in popularity to law comes medicine. Teaching is not lucrative enough to attract many promising youths, and the priests of the Roman Catholic Church are almost all white Frenchmen.[2]

793 2. An effort was once made by the Catholic Church to train native Haitian priests,
797 but the peasants would have none of them after they were ordained. They drove them out, saying, "Go away! How do you expect God to listen to you? You are not white; you don't know anything." And the Haitian priests had to be transferred as missionaries to Africa.

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At Paris the following May, therefore, the thirty-seven delegates presented themselves. Only six were admitted as deputies. And the colonial skeptics proved correct in their apprehensions: revolutionary France soon became very much interested in the state of affairs in Saint-Domingue.

There had recently been formed in Paris a humanitarian group, considered at the time to be ultra-radical, whose announced purpose was the complete abolition of Negro slavery in all French possessions. Following the principle of demanding much in order to gain something, these *Amis des Noirs* concentrated their most serious efforts on regaining for colored colonial freedmen their former political rights. The recently promulgated "Rights of Man" made it very difficult for the French National Assembly[11] to deny the proposal of the Amis;[12] moreover, at this juncture the colored landlords of Saint-Domingue sent to Paris an offer to make the new French Republic a free gift of one fifth of their wealth on condition of being no longer subject to the creole tyranny of caste.

The strategical blunder of the self-assertive white planters having now become entirely apparent to their deputies in Paris, these left no stone unturned to thwart the objective of the Amis des Noirs. By indefatigable manoeuvring they at least partially succeeded, for the National Assembly passed an ambiguous resolution which, while apparently granting political rights to colored people, nevertheless left the interpretation of the grant to already existing colonial authorities.

In the colony complete confusion reigned when news of the resolution was received. Colored people everywhere joyfully demanded their rights, only to be indignantly refused. The whites, with no intention of yielding an inch, were nevertheless undecided as to a proper course of action to pursue: one group wished to announce the colony's immediate independence from France, offering the familiar argument that only white planters knew how to manage the colony's peculiar affairs; the other group still cautiously counseled inaction and waiting for the storm to blow over. A young mulatto, Ogé, educated in France and encouraged by the Amis des

11. The National Assembly had succeeded the States-General.

12. The Assembly was finding "liberté, égalité, fraternité" as uncomfortable a motto to live up to as Americans were finding their own declaration, in 1776, of belief in the "self-evident" proposition that *all men* are created free and equal.

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Noirs, having returned to Saint-Domingue to campaign for the political rights of his group, led with his friend Chavanne a demonstration at Cap Français. The white authorities seized and executed them with notable brutality.

This occurred in March, 1791. In May came the news that the National Assembly in France had finally yielded to pressure, and had decreed that men of mixed blood born of free parents should be admitted to representation in colonial assemblies. The chagrin and anger of the whites at this decree was so violent that the governor-general of Saint-Domingue immediately suspended its operation. The issue was now clearly drawn: free colored men knew that they would never secure their rights except by force. But before they could bring to maturity their plan of action, suddenly the calculations of both parties were completely upset. The Negro slaves revolted.

If ever slaves had reason to rebel, the Negroes of Saint-Domingue did. The same harshness which the whites showed to free colored people marked the treatment of black slaves; and as racial antagonism deepened, white masters seemed to become utterly heartless in their treatment of the inarticulate blacks. Allowing for the exceptions which accompany most generalizations, it is clear from the record that the planters were, in the main, callous, ruthless, some of them even fiendish, in their treatment of slaves. Flogging a man to death was not uncommon; certain slaves were buried alive; pregnant women were forced to work so hard that miscarriage resulted. Some of the punishments meted out were merely brutal; others were torture; and some were sadistic, the masters relishing the pain they were causing. A certain slave in the North was nailed by his hands to a wall, and then, after standing all day in the burning sun, was made to eat his own amputated ears. A woman planter had the tongues of all her slaves cut out; another woman caused the starvation of her maid by having a gag fixed around the child's head.[13] Visitors to the colony in the 1780's often commented on the general want of self-control on the part of the planters—their violent gusts of anger and passionate outbreaks over trifles; and the victims of these outbursts

13. An officer of the court of the Negro king Christophe later wrote in two volumes a gruesome account of the treatment of slaves by French masters in the latter days of the colony. Although certainly exaggerated, it probably contains a measure of truth. See Baron de Vastey, *Réflexions politiques sur les noirs et les blancs* (Sans Souci, 1817); and *Essai sur les causes de la révolution et des guerres civiles d'Hayti* (Sans Souci, 1819).

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deftly had him promoted out of colonial office. When another group of commissioners came, he agreed in conference with them that the remaining whites should be expelled for the sake of peace; as soon as this was done, however, he effected the nomination of both the chief commissioner and General Laveaux as representatives of the colony in the French Assembly, sitting in Paris. Under guise of bestowing honors, he had got rid of every white person who had the slightest claim to rule. By 1797 Toussaint was the supreme leader in Saint-Domingue, his authority disputed only by Rigaud and the colored group. A civil war was needed to settle the issue between them, and since his forces were much more numerous than Rigaud's, Toussaint emerged victor in the brief conflict. Rigaud fled to France, the power of the mulattoes was broken, and no one was left openly to contest Toussaint's rule.

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"The First of the Blacks," as Toussaint was called, is a bewildering anomaly, and full of contradictions. He had been a slave for fifty years before the insurrection, and was to live only eleven after it. In that short period he became one of the most talked-of men in the world. His Spanish superior officer had said that "God in this terrestrial globe could not commune with a purer spirit"; the Frenchman, Lacroix, remarked, "No one approaches him without fear, and no one leaves him without respect." Even his enemies paid him homage: an English officer, as "a man, a governor, and a general"; a white Frenchman, as "a philosopher, a general, and a good citizen." When he died Wordsworth wrote a moving sonnet to him who had strengthened human faith in "man's unconquerable mind." Yet Toussaint had been a deserter and a schemer, and ruthlessly exploited his power to achieve absolute authority. His own deep conviction of his special mission to lead his people from misery to security has always for his apologists excused the more dubious aspects of his character.

To many Toussaint was a hero with elements of saintliness. In the overheated atmosphere of prejudice and hatred in Saint-Domingue he pursued a calm policy of moderation. Under him, anarchy and massacres came to an end. With an army at his beck and call, he used force only to maintain freedom for his fellow blacks and to defend the colony against foreign invasion. As nominal governor-general after 1799 he revived prosperity, inculcated discipline as an antidote to the intoxication of liberty, respected his contracts, and was a friend of law and order. On the other hand, he had moments

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of inordinate vanity, and would brook no interference. His henchmen had to endure merciless tongue-lashings. His own people's freedom, about which he was publicly so solicitous, was in many respects little better than slavery.

What he did is more easily told than what he was. Emerging, after a long reign of terror, as a leader in a land which had once been a paradise for whites, he checked among his people the passion and fear which had led to violence. With the restoration of peace, labor began once more on the plantations. The Negroes, though no longer slaves, were ordered back to work, and they docilely obeyed. The return of prosperity between 1799 and 1802 was amazing.

But the brilliance of Toussaint's rule was first dimmed and then completely extinguished by the rising star of Napoleon in France.[17] Haitian history between 1802 and 1804, although apparently incidental to the story of the contest between blacks and colored people which here concerns us, is nevertheless significant for an understanding of what was to transpire in Haitian social affairs. Napoleon was irritated beyond measure at the effrontery of Toussaint's seizure of power in the colony. The black leader had shown canny statesmanship in winning the friendly coöperation of the president of the United States, John Adams. The supplies and ships that Adams sent enabled Toussaint not only to defeat Rigaud but to achieve independence from France in all but name. With American assistance, Toussaint negotiated an advantageous treaty with England. Probably even more annoying to the First Consul than these political triumphs was Toussaint's audacious success in aping and even anticipating the spacious actions by which Napoleon was trying to make himself majestic in the world's eyes.[18]

It is possible that Napoleon might not have paid so much attention

17. It seems strange that this black, a veritable genius whatever his faults, should be so mildly honored in modern Haiti. True, he is regarded with respect, and there are a few statues of him; but the homage of the people is paid rather to his successor, General Dessalines, the antithesis of Toussaint in everything but courage. It was Dessalines, of course, who struck the final blow for Haitian freedom, but even this triumph seems to the foreigner small in comparison with the very real achievements of Toussaint.

18. For example: Napoleon had given a new constitution to France after his *coup d'état* of the 18 Brumaire; similarly Toussaint, having effected his own coup in Saint-Domingue by deposing the French civil agent, citizen Roume, immediately thereafter gave *his* people a new constitution. In it he not only assumed all political power for life, but also ascribed to himself the right of naming his successor. Bonaparte was unable to take so daring a step for another year. There is ample evidence to show that meanwhile he chafed under the idea of being imitated and anticipated by a "gilded African," as he called Toussaint.

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than a hundred dollars each; wasting money, squandering men. On the other side, Dessalines and Christophe massacred every white within their reach. Rochambeau held on until November, 1803, when he surrendered with his few remaining men to the English in Jamaica.

On January 1, 1804, Dessalines proclaimed the independence of Haiti, choosing this aboriginal Indian name (meaning "mountainous") rather than the French Saint-Domingue. What the colored people had begun with their petitions to the French Assembly in 1789 had now worked itself out, but along lines entirely different from their hopes or plans. The whites were gone, but the blacks were in control. Now a struggle for precedence was to begin between the ruling blacks and the still aspiring people of color."

31. The historical details rehearsed in this chapter are summarized from the many documented monographs and histories of the period cited in the Bibliography at the end of this volume. It seems unnecessary to quote such entry for each historical statement made in this sketch of background material.

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III

THE FORMATIVE YEARS, 1804–1843

1. *Dessalines* (*1804–1806*)

IF ever a country had an opportunity to start absolutely fresh in choosing its own social institutions, Haiti had that opportunity in 1804. Free at last, with no traditions to uphold, the first independent Negro state in the world, owing allegiance to no man or nation, the Haitians might (theoretically, at least) have invented an entirely new little world of economic, political, religious, and social life. All paths were open to them. Dessalines,[1] as head of state, had only to lead them. His mental limitations, however, were such that he could only follow where the hated French had led, and soon set the Haitians upon the road to a caste system.

The first part of the story of independent Haiti is to a certain extent the story of the alternative lines of action laid down by four great men, the black Dessalines and his equally black successor Christophe, the mulatto Pétion and his worshipful mulatto disciple Boyer.

On New Year's Day, 1804, Dessalines made a stirring proclamation of independence. In it were many references to *liberté* but none whatever to *égalité* or *fraternité*. The two years of his rule show clearly that he had no use for such abstractions as equality or fraternity, while liberty to him was synonymous only with freedom from French dominance. He was a tyrant whose very tyranny unwittingly prepared the way for eventual control by the colored group over the blacks.

Accompanying the proclamation of Dessalines was another signed by his generals, naming him governor-general for life, swearing "to obey blindly all laws emanating from his authority," giving him the right to make peace or war, and permitting him to name his successor. Absolutism was the order of the day. In the same paragraph in which he condemned French despotism, Dessalines said to his

1. Jean-Jacques Dessalines had been born a slave on a plantation near Grande-Rivière du Nord in the seventeen-fifties or -sixties. Unlike Toussaint, whose leading general he was, Dessalines was illiterate. The outstanding characteristic of his temperament was his violent passion.

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people: "If ever you refuse, or grumblingly accept, the laws which the genius guarding your destinies dictates to me for your happiness, you will merit the fate of ungrateful people. But perish that hideous idea!" There can be little doubt that he wished Haiti under his direction to become prosperous; but it is likewise clear that he was personally self-centred and inordinately grasping.

Each step Dessalines took to further his ambitions either for Haitian prosperity or for his own fortunes had its bearing upon the development of social classes in the country. Extermination of all remaining whites was one of the first tasks he set himself. On a promise of clemency he lured several hundred gullible French out of hiding, and butchered them in cold blood. His campaign of extirpation was methodical and thorough. To try to penetrate into the psychological background of this violence is to desert fact for speculation: it may have been a desire for revenge on the French, pure and simple; it may have been gloating sadism; he may have wished to warn France against any future attempts to regain possession of the country; or he may have wanted to notify his subjects of his intention to rule with severe discipline. Certainly this last aim was achieved, if any of his people did not already know, after two years of warfare, the extent of his ruthlessness. He ruled by fear and by threats, never by the cultivation of loyalties.

Apparently he was afraid that Napoleon would renew his efforts to subdue the former colony. To forestall such an attempt he ordered each of his governing subalterns to construct one great fort on the most prominent hill in their district—a scheme which led immediately to the institution of forced labor. He likewise devised a plan, not actually put into effect, for destroying all towns and plantations near the coast and moving the capital to an inland village; and so isolating Haitians from all contact with the outside world.

Turning to domestic policy, he faced a herculean task. The warfare of 1802–3 had left the country in chaos. Plantations and agricultural projects were almost totally ruined. All habits of steady industry had been lost. Dread of a possible new attack by the French made necessary a great army, and this in turn removed most able-bodied men from productive labor in the fields, while the construction of fortresses still further depleted the labor supply. The first census of free Haiti, in 1805 (probably not highly accurate), showed only 380,000 people, with the women outnumbering men by almost three to two.

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two. Here was a decline of about 150,000 from 1790.[2] It is a commentary on the man's forcefulness that in spite of all difficulties Dessalines established an effective economic organization. Its basis was serfdom.

Every citizen, he announced, must consider himself in one of two categories, laborer or soldier. There were to be no shirkers in the new Haiti; if a man was not in the army, he must do manual labor. Artisans who followed a craft counted as laborers. Women, since they could not join the army, must work shoulder to shoulder with their men. It was understood that direction of Haiti's new order would be carried on by state officials who were neither laborers nor soldiers, but these officials were to be so few that they would not constitute a separate third category.

This step of Dessalines' was a radical one. It proclaimed the mastery of state over individual; and even more significantly it divided the people according to economic task, rather than birth, wealth, color, or social status. At first the more ambitious citizens bore patiently with the arbitrary decree, thinking they might be able to achieve comfortable status under a lenient definition of "soldier" or else by sinecure tasks as officials. Their disillusionment was swift. Even swifter was the chagrin of the lowly folk who had been slaves, for they found themselves now in actual bondage to one of their own color.

All people except soldiers, ran the decree, must be "attached as cultivators to a plantation." This might be translated to read "bound to the soil." The vast majority of the people were forced willy-nilly into agriculture. It was "formally prohibited for a cultivator to desert the plantation to which he was assigned"; conversely, it was a crime to give asylum to a runaway cultivator, male or female.[3] If such conditions differed from slavery, they were at least close to what the mediaeval world knew as serfdom. But under this régime of forced labor the recently ravaged fields once more became productive: cotton plantations again covered the plain of the Artibonite, and sugar refineries were slowly rebuilt all over the country.

To forestall complaint from the people once again driven into

2. See, for an analysis of population figures, Placide Justin, *Histoire politique et statistique de l'Ile d'Hayti, Saint-Domingue* (Paris, 1826), pp. 502–503.

3. A certain Mlle. Chapotin, of respectable family, was accused of having harbored a fugitive female cultivator, and, since she was unable to pay immediately the fine imposed upon her by the police at Port-au-Prince, she was condemned to serve a jail term.

The former affranchis fully intended to keep
38 their lands THE HAITIAN PEOPLE once the
175 French were driven out. They could not but be alarmed as they saw
423 the steady direction of Dessalines' moves toward a complete mo-
425 nopoly of land ownership by the state. On the very day following
471 independence, a decree proclaimed that all lands owned by France in colonial days now belonged to Haiti. Next (February 7, 1804) Dessalines canceled all sales and donations made to mulattoes and ex-slaves by fleeing French who, in a last despairing effort to salvage something from the wreckage of olden days, had "entrusted" their lands to non-whites. By these two strokes all lands owned by white men before 1803 became state property,[5] but only the second clipped the wings of socially ambitious colored people.

175 Serious uneasiness was caused by the next measure, an order for a
421 general verification of property titles. This would have been a deli-
[693] cate task at best, considering the disorder of the past thirteen years. It was made more complicated to carry out by the serious lack of men trained in law. A few like Balthasar Inginac, later an important adviser and trusted friend of two presidents, were scrupulously conscientious, but by the same token highly unpopular with those whom they deprived of newly (and shadily) acquired "estates." The majority of officials, according to report, listened to the pleading of many who had managed by hook or crook to secure a tenuous claim to vacant properties, validating their fraudulent titles for them. It has been claimed, without rebuttal, that most of these officials were not above taking bribes. When complaint was made to Dessalines of such actions he took steps to make his appointees do their duty, but each confiscation made new enemies for Dessalines.

Some of the mulattoes, citing their French paternity, claimed land formerly owned by their French fathers, even though these parents had never regarded their sons as more than bastards. Dessalines once broke out in furious answer to such a claimant: "*Et les pauvres*
175 *nègres dont les pères sont en Afrique, ils n'auront donc rien!*"
425 The state took over thousands of acres. Those Haitians, colored or
556 black, who aspired to landownership as the foundation of position,

[642] 5. The hatred of the Haitians for the French, and because of them, for white people
[643] in general, was seen not only in these confiscations but in commitments for the future. A proclamation of April 28, 1804, suppressed to "all foreigners" the right to own property in land. The first Haitian constitution, May 20, 1805, took an even more drastic step in saying that "no white man shall henceforth set foot in this country as a landowner," and that "*all* property formerly belonging to a white Frenchman" was now confiscate to the profit of the state.

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such an example of rigor might spread. The moral element of the population had long looked askance at his libertinage; his first act upon entering a town during a visit of state was regularly to have his aides select for him the most attractive females in the vicinity, with whom he would spend more time than at the business of governing. Not even his army was sorrowful over his death. He had let his loyal troops go for months without pay, and then, reviewing a group of them one day, taunted and railed at them for their ragged uniforms. "You look as naked as a bunch of old bottles!" he cried.

Dessalines had restored order to his country and had founded a state. Both achievements rested upon a display of force which inspired cringing fear and denied normal human aspirations. His entire social and economic order was based upon the subservience of the many to the few.

2. *Christophe* (*1807–1820*)

Until 1807 all Haitians had the same political background—the French colonial régime, revolution, the governorship of Toussaint, and the stern rule of Dessalines. Now the common path forked. Two avenues were opened up during the next dozen years, one by Christophe, the other by his Southern and mulatto rival, Pétion. The former was the road of discipline, hard work, and feudal control; the latter was one of persuasion, *laissez faire*, and small properties. Haiti ultimately chose the second.

The logical successor to Dessalines was his powerful Negro henchman, Christophe.[8] This black general felt so certain of his leadership that he did not even bother to attend the *Assemblée Constituante* which was to choose the new head of state. The mulattoes, however, had agreed among themselves that they had had enough of rule by ignorant ex-slaves. They consequently performed the very skillful manoeuvre of preparing a constitution which should effectively shear a new president of dictatorial power; this done, they dutifully elected Christophe to the presidential office. The wrathful general peremptorily declined to rule by virtue of so anaemic a document, and led his army southward to demand proper respect for his august

8. The name Christophe was taken from the English Caribbean island of St. Christopher, on which this black slave was born. Later in life he took as his first name Henry, spelling it in the English fashion rather than the French, as an indication of his wholehearted admiration of English people and English ways.

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person. To his evident surprise he was met not by meek submission, but by the army of the mulatto Pétion. Christophe was not defeated; neither was he victorious. He was obliged to retire in high dudgeon to his loyal supporters in the North, where he proceeded to set up a state according to his own idea of what a state should be.

The Assembly thereupon outlawed Christophe on the ground of rebellion against constituted authority, electing in his stead their great favorite Pétion, whose power as president of the Republic was to be limited by the new constitution. For the next thirteen years, from 1807 to 1820, the tiny country with its 10,000 square miles was divided, Christophe ruling in the North and in the fertile valley of the Artibonite, and Pétion governing until his death in 1818 in the West and South, the main strongholds of the colored element.

Christophe was of the stuff that myths are made of. He was indisputably Haiti's most dynamic, relentlessly effective, and dramatic ruler of the nineteenth century. Like Toussaint and Dessalines, he was a black ex-slave, and like them he had won his spurs as a military leader during the revolution. He was an ardent patriot whose love for his country did not lead to retrogressive chauvinism. Whereas Dessalines through fear and hatred of the French had excluded all white men from Haiti, Christophe had the perspicacity to see that the country could benefit from the contribution of whites. Englishmen he especially welcomed. Like his predecessors Christophe drove his people—with a tyrant's lash, many thought—but only to increase the glory of Haiti.

Christophe had a vaulting imagination which brought glamour even to practical expedients. He built a colossal fortress on a high mountain in the North, partly for defense, but partly to make his contemned Negro people feel that they could achieve one of the architectural and engineering marvels of the age. His exquisite palace, Sans Souci, not only satisfied his own vanity as a ruler but also provided a focal point for the imagination and loyalty of his subjects. In 1811 he had himself crowned king, Henry I, amidst pomp and circumstance—and then created a royal court, partly to reward his leaders, partly to get the fees for patents of nobility, but primarily to bind all important men in the country to himself and to the Haitian state with unbreakable personal bonds. Dramatic in almost every particular of his life and reign, he ruled for thirteen years more through force of personality than by tyranny. Taxes were heavy

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therefore plantations must be made to yield the uttermost farthing if the nobleman was to pay for the necessities of strict court etiquette. It was by no means a childish whim which prompted Christophe to call himself a king; rather an intelligent utilization of the human material the leader had to work with. Vanity was to serve an economic and a political purpose.

Christophe perceived that the defect of Dessalines' reign had been lack of security, both of person and property. Agriculture is a long-term investment and so must be hedged about by orderly rules. To this end the monarch stated his laws clearly, charged a fixed tax—one fourth of the annual crop—which would enrich the kingdom while allowing the tenant-proprietor a reasonable profit, and then guaranteed that no arbitrary demands would be made. Certainly there was no pampering of the wealthy, but there was ample prosperity resulting from regularity and security.

The ordinary citizen was, as he had been, bound to the soil as an agricultural laborer. This quasi-serfdom, however, was comparative freedom. It simply meant that the home and work of a man must be at the plantation on which he had been born. Saturday afternoons and Sundays were free, so that the laborers might make the most of their opportunities to visit the nearest market village, to buy and sell small goods, gossip, and enjoy the sociability of being part of a crowd. Being bound to the soil meant simply that they could not move, when the impulse seized them, to another plantation or another part of the country. Those whose mothers or relatives were natives of a plantation must return to that estate, being forbidden to live in towns. No person, military or other, who did not derive his living from a plantation, could marry an agricultural worker—a prohibition designed to prevent workers from leaving estates because of family ties, and particularly to prevent women, as mothers of future cultivators, from deserting agriculture.

Mediaeval serfdom itself went no further in binding people to the soil. Indeed, it did not go so far in regulating the daily life of serfs. Under Christophe the cultivators lived according to a routine as strict as that of a school. Reveille was rung as early as three o'clock to arouse women to prepare breakfasts for their menfolk; by four or four-thirty the bell was sounded for the commencement of work, which began after prayers had been led by the overseer. At nine o'clock there was a pause for luncheon, and then a resumption of

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vengeance but the utter extermination of that race."[12] He even ordered the execution of a mulatto woman in Gonaïves because she had prayed for the success of Pétion.

During the latter years of his reign his personal popularity waned somewhat, owing to his relentless insistence upon efficiency and to his increasing tendency to lose his temper. Defections to the South occurred almost daily. The cultivators, comparing their never-ceasing toil on Northern plantations with the reported liberty and leisure of life in the South, continually drifted away. So alluring was the paradise of ease (and poverty) of the neighboring realm that Christophe found it necessary to keep a cordon of soldiers along the borders of his kingdom to prevent desertions. His administration now embarked on actual persecution of colored people. Inflammatory pamphlets were spread abroad, designed to make the Negroes think that the mulattoes were planning to enslave them once again. Under this campaign of propaganda many light-skinned Northerners had to go into hiding.

Despite all discrimination, the important line was drawn between cultivators who formed nine tenths of the population, and aristocrats who, with the army, made up the remainder. The nobility, the directors of landed estates, and the generals directed the activities of other people, so that the colonial prejudice against manual labor was strengthened. Here lay the basis of a persistent Haitian attitude of mind: to work with one's hands is to show oneself a member of the masses; to direct others is the distinction of the upper class. Education, neglected under Dessalines altogether, was fostered by Christophe. He established a few schools, inviting as schoolmasters certain Englishmen familiar with the then popular methods of the Lancasterian system; but since the cultivators were busy on the plantations, only the children of aristocrats benefited by the limited educational system and the social distance between classes was increased.

A French commentator says that Christophe showed unusual insight in devising for his kingdom "the only organization of which an African society was capable," namely, a combination of military despotism with certain benevolent inclinations, and territorial feudalism based upon a nobility created by the King. Actually, it suited not so much the African background of the people, which lay

12. Dr. Jonathan Brown, *The History and Present Condition of St. Domingo* (Philadelphia, 1837), II, 197.

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114 642 175 at least a generation behind them, but rather their complete lack of any experience in self-rule. The author continues:

[471] In addition to the vanity of the black which was flattered by the distribution of principalities and duchies, there was the political thought which wished to fortify things by words. The most important sugar manufactories were distributed, with the property title, to the principal officers and civil agents of the government. Workers were allotted to these very much as were the Indians to the first Spanish conquerors. . . . Moreover, since African blood dominated in the North [that is, since there were few mulattoes and lighter-skinned people], the feudal lords, aided by the color of their skin, could enforce obedience to a yoke which in name only was modified [from slavery].[13]

175 642 566 631 421 625 692 The social organization of Christophe's kingdom, then, was one of large properties, with all the feudalistic trappings, resting upon a solid base of wage-earning serfdom. In contrast to mediaeval feudalism, the king was here much more than *primus inter pares.* Thanks to the policy of Dessalines, most land had come into state ownership, so that the nobility received their estates by royal favor, and held them as leases only so long as the King pleased. As in the Middle Ages, the noblemen were petty monarchs within the district granted to their jurisdiction. Their freedom of action, however, was even here subject to scrutiny: detachments of Royal Dahomets[14] were stationed in every cantonment or parish, to enforce discipline, keep the King informed, and find their own subsistence without a drain on the royal treasury. In every district was set up a court of *sénéchaussée* to see that justice obtained.[15] The King's law, not the nobleman's private code, prevailed in the whole country.[16]

13. R. Lepelletier de Saint-Remy, *Saint-Domingue* (Paris, 1846), II, 167–168.

14. Organized after the model of the police force existing in France before 1789.

15. These courts were composed of a royally appointed seneschal and his assistant, a king's procurer, and a clerk.

[671] 16. The Code Henry was promulgated on January 30, 1812. It consisted of seven parts: Civil, Commercial, Shipping and Maritime, Civil Process, Criminal and Police Process, Agricultural, and Military. In general the Code followed French precedent, but the section on Agriculture was Christophe's own. Sir James Basket (in his *History of the Island of St. Domingo* [London, 1818], p. 413) calls this part "a thing unexampled among other nations." It reveals not only the King's absorption in the main economic enterprise of his state, but also his skill in devising an integrated functioning of a social order of nobility and serfs with a plantation economy based on money crops. This Agricultural Law regulated such diverse matters as the reciprocal duties of proprietors and cultivators, the policing of plantations, and the culture and preparation of the major crops. It set forth industry as the parent of virtue, and idleness as the source of vice.

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Northern Haiti flourished magnificently under Christophe's sternly benevolent rule. The King had that daring spirit of initiative which was so generally lacking in later Haitian history; he had, in addition, the power necessary to force through a new adjustment if the old way showed defects.[17] He excited artificial wants among his leaders by making nobles of them, and then compelled them to satisfy these wants without ever slipping back to a lower standard of living. Thirteen years of enforced labor and of order kept by a rigorously effective police force gave northern Haiti the kind of prosperity she had known in colonial days. Christophe encouraged commerce and protected foreign traders. He called in all debased coinage, substituting for it sound gold and silver currency. The revenue he raised was larger than it had been since 1791, amounting to about $3,500,000 annually. Probably the most eloquent testimony to his success is the fact that at his death, when the kingdom of the North was once more united with the republic of the South, more than six million dollars found their way into the republican treasury.

The Black King's economic system worked. It was based on a social division of the people, with the masses doing manual labor, and the aristocrats definitely set apart and recognized as upper class. By 1820 Haiti was well on its way toward the caste system.

3. *Pétion* (*1807–1818*)

Almost all Latin-American countries in the nineteenth century exhibited one common feature: an aristocratic landowning class lording it over peons. Haiti did not follow this pattern. She had aristocrats and peasants, but the aristocrats did not own most of the land, and the peasants were not peons. If later rulers had kept the organization of economic life begun by Toussaint and developed by his fellow blacks, Dessalines and Christophe, it is almost certain that Haitian social evolution would have resembled that of the rest of Latin America, for it would not have been a great change from

17. Duraciné Vaval, "Le Roi d'Haïti Henri Christophe," in *Revue de la Société d'Histoire et de Géographie d'Haïti*, II, No. 3 (June 1931), p. 14, says that Haiti's periodic civil troubles and social misfortunes, both ending in a diminution of the state's autonomy, have been due to economic maladjustments. "Our weaknesses in political life derive from our immobility in material production." Immobility is an index of stagnation. Few rulers of Haiti have been at once powerful enough to overcome the immobility and wise enough to know what measures had to be taken.

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175 Haitian writers sometimes praise Pétion for his democratic leanings, by implication criticizing Toussaint, Dessalines, and Christophe for their feudalistic notions. If the blacks were undemocratic, at least they had experience back of the system they selected for administering the land: their methods worked. Pétion's plan, on the contrary, admirable though it seemed to later "liberals," was unexpectedly disappointing. The national income declined; estates were steadily broken up and sub-leased to small farmers; sugar disappeared from the state's balance sheet, while coffee did not supply an equivalent income; discipline of the workers gave way to individualism. Although the whole legislative code favored the landlords, la grande culture crumbled. One is driven to conclude that Pétion simply tried one device after another—always the easiest he could find—to keep state economy functioning.

175 When Pétion came to power, the common folk of southern Haiti were serfs with a memory of slavery; when he died, they were peasants. At the beginning of his régime the mulattoes and other social aspirants felt they were struggling for very existence against the relentless policies of black rulers; as it closed they were beyond any doubt aristocrats, but by the same token progressively less well-to-do. No one any longer attacked their social pretensions; but the worldly wealth on which these pretensions were based was disappearing along with the country's prosperity, so that new criteria had to be developed.

175 As we have said, the keynote of Pétion's rule was persuasion. Where Dessalines ordered, Pétion suggested; where Christophe decreed, Pétion recommended. There is not a single act one could cite during his entire presidency which had the effect of tightening up the organization of the republic. When laws were not properly observed, instead of penalties being made more severe or sure of application, the laws themselves were calmly allowed to lapse. In fact, the period from 1807 to 1818 was one of transition, of experiment, of discovering a congenial way of life. Since it was clear that the mass of citizens were peacefully disposed and unambitious, the President was inclined to let custom rule in each little community. Laws were not repealed, but they were enforced only when general public opinion was clearly in their favor. At many points the upper class would have liked more disciplinary control over the masses and said so to Pétion; yet they realized that in a less than ideal world one

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175 In his easygoing republic Pétion saw prosperity slowly wane,
433 cultivation decline, profits give way to deficits. He issued a large
652 amount of paper currency, and continually hoped for better times
554 which did not come. The days of large fortunes were over. The economic system affected the aristocrats: although they were still landowners, so also were thousands of common folk. The criterion of rank became increasingly not wealth, but rather pursuit of a career which demanded no manual labor. Distinctions, if they are to be effective, must be made on the basis of conditions not easily achieved by all and sundry. Education and good French met this requirement; even more did a light skin color.

175 Pétion, darling of the mulattoes though he was, never drew a color
643 line. There is no suggestion in any of his actions that he gave prefer-
641 ence in his appointments to people of his own color. He suppressed
563 at least one insurrection led by men who would have liked to stir up color prejudice. He often tried by quiet irony to make his people less sensitive to their complexions. It is eloquent testimony to his fairness that the 200,000 blacks in the republic never faltered in their love for him. They had ample reason to mistrust the haughty and ambitious colored people, some of whom had lorded it over them in colonial days; but they knew that the President did not share their pretentious attitude. One look at the North, ruled by a black, was enough to convince any Southerner that his happiness was safer in the hands of a mulatto than in those of a Negro ex-slave. At Pétion's death, therefore, there was no demur at the succession to power of another light-skinned man.

175 Haitians of a later day have discussed at great length the wisdom
643 of Pétion's parceling of state lands. His supporters (and they are
● 642 numerous) as well as his critics generally keep the controversy on the lofty plane of ideals, intentions, and hypothetical contingencies. Pétion is praised for being generous to humble folk where all other rulers of his country had been severe; for being a realist in accepting and adjusting his measures to the limitations of the average Haitian's character; for building a patriotism upon love of one's own small plot of land; for ruling constitutionally, with his Senate, rather than dictatorially. Most especially, Pétion is the one man among the early rulers who seemed to have any realization of the human values involved. Material gain is desirable but not at the expense of liberty. Freedom means something, even in poverty.

The critics do not challenge Pétion's good intentions or integrity;

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they even comment upon his unselfish generosity, which seems to have been entirely free of any desire for personal gain. They accuse him rather of taking the easiest course—that of trying to pacify every group in the republic: the masses, by giving them land and removing any external compulsion to work on it; the army, by making their enlistment profitable; the aspiring aristocrats, by validating their titles to estates and not challenging their prestige with a demand for responsibility. Strong states, the critics argue, are built on lines of discipline, not of perpetual yielding.

From an economic point of view a more valid criticism would ask the simple question: what was the practical result of his policies? Under the three previous Negro rulers agriculture had prospered, for these men kept state lands intact and forced the population to work; under Pétion, on the contrary, prosperity steadily declined with the division of land and the removal of compulsion. To expect a body of illiterate, inexperienced ex-slaves automatically to develop such economic virtues as industry, foresight, and thrift in a land which never knew any of these is not realistic, but merely quixotic. The Haitian critic Magloire implies that Pétion was either completely and cynically indifferent to common graft or else naïvely confident that men newly free would somehow be preternaturally honest. He goes into detail:

> Lands were distributed free, without order or method, each person taking what came his way and establishing himself as he could; graft and jobbery, under varied guises, governed the granting of concessions. As for properties in the towns, some people established themselves in upstairs apartments and others in ground-floor ones, without bothering to think of the lawsuits which might result from this disorder. In the sales made by the State, 50 and 100 and 200 gourdes were paid for real estate which was worth 10,000 and 20,000 and 40,000 gourdes or more. The administration put up for sale the property of towns, of communes, and of the State. Even buildings occupied in colonial days by officials, buildings whose construction had cost considerable sums, were bestowed on the people. . . .
>
> By a too great fractioning of the national domain, and carried away by the influence of false egalitarian and democratic ideas, Pétion brought about what a modern writer calls "the forcible neglect of agriculture"[32] throughout the Republic.[33]

32. J. N. Léger, *Haiti: son histoire et ses détracteurs* (New York, 1907), p. 162.
33. Auguste Magloire, *L'Erreur révolutionnaire et notre état social* (Port-au-Prince, 1909), pp. 260–263.

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175 Practically every contemporary foreign visitor contrasted the
114 divergent policies of Christophe and Pétion to the overwhelming
433 advantage of the former. One Englishman, intent upon defending the Negro against the charge of "natural indolence," went so far as to say that the majority of the people in the republic, although "possessed of small estates, on which they earned their living," were yet no less diligent than the forced laborers on Christophe's plantations in the North.[34] His only proof of this contention, however, was the greater volume of commerce at Port-au-Prince, capital of the republic, than at Cap-Henry (now Cap-Haïtien), capital of the kingdom.

175 The economic case is strongly against Pétion. The decline of
433 large-scale agriculture, the empty treasury, governmental purchase
652 of surpluses when prices were low, debasing the coinage[35]—by such
642 practical proofs, the republic was vastly less efficient than the stern dictatorship of the kingdom. But Pétion's people had freedom, while Christophe's were serfs. And Pétion's republic endured, to become reunited Haiti. The kingdom perished with Christophe.

4. *The Final Effort toward Plantation Life (1818–1826)*

175 The mantle of Pétion fell in 1818 upon the shoulders of his
643 meticulous secretary and minister, Jean-Pierre Boyer. Two years
642 later, upon the death of Christophe, the kingdom of the North was once again united, without a struggle, to the South.[36] It is conceivable that the refined mulatto Boyer might have infused into his people a spirit of industry and ambition, now that tranquillity reigned after fourteen years of separation and warfare. The people of the North had had a long experience of intense activity, while those of the

34. W. W. Harvey, *Sketches of Hayti; from the Expulsion of the French, to the Death of Christophe* (London, 1827), pp. 361 ff.

[652] 35. Pétion's coins were so easily imitated that the country was inundated with counterfeit money. The government issued only five million dollars worth of this currency, but in 1818 twelve millions were in circulation, the surplus having been fabricated in Europe and the United States.

[175] [643] [642] [648] 36. In 1822–23 Boyer likewise succeeded, with little fighting, in bringing the Spanish two thirds of the island (Santo Domingo) into the republic. For the first time since 1697 the whole island was really unified under one rule. Toussaint had held it in 1801–3 and the Haitians claimed it thereafter, but real unity did not come until Boyer's time, when all the Spanish colonies in the New World were breaking away from their mother country. Santo Domingo regained its independence in 1844 shortly after the abdication of Boyer.

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South in general had the most loyal feeling toward a government which had been benevolently generous to them. A blend of the two might have been fruitful.

It was not any want of patriotism that caused Boyer to miss his great opportunity but rather a defect of ability. Desiring, like Pétion, to lead rather than to drive his people, he nevertheless lacked even more than his former chief the force of personality which might have persuaded them to work hard for the greater glory of Haiti. Despising the brutal compulsion exercised by Dessalines and Christophe, which he regarded as savage and too closely resembling the earlier methods of slave owners; wishing to emulate solely the gentleness of his predecessor, Boyer hoped for a number of years that his people would become industrious of their own accord. His hopes were frustrated. During his twenty-five-year presidency the mass of Haitians became so indifferent to pecuniary inducements that little work could be got from them beyond that required to produce necessary food. As commerce declined, the President was driven to fresh issues of debased currency and to the opening of mines in different parts of the country, though he knew that the richest mine Haiti possessed was its still fertile soil.

For the first seven years Boyer pursued a policy based on hopeful expectation, refusing to inaugurate any of the forceful measures of his black predecessors. But by 1823 the treasury, enriched though it had been by the surplus from Christophe's exchequer, was empty; in 1824 disbursements exceeded income. Convinced in 1825 that his *laissez-faire* policy was failing to produce results, he decided to heed the insistent counsel of those (including most of the aristocratic, landholding class) who advised the reëstablishment of a coercive system of agriculture. His officials showed him that nowhere in the country were sugar plantations any longer being cultivated on a great scale—except for a few estates run by government officials who could command the forced labor of convicts. The policy of offering cultivators a fourth of the total crop of a plantation as wages was luring practically no laborers to work.[37] Even the few owners who offered the fourth plus daily wages had no success. Quite simply, the average Haitian preferred to be his own master, working only when he wished, and particularly working only for himself and his family.

37. This fourth in wages must not be confused with the quarter in taxes abolished by Pétion. See page 46 for a discussion of the quarter-crop wage system.

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trary; they were grudgingly respected as superior beings, arbiters of the fate of the outside world, potential destroyers of the privileges of the Haitian élite should they return to the country in force. Although white men might not legally marry Haitian women, it was not every woman who could resist the opportunity of having children lighter than herself. One indication of the ambiguous attitude toward the whites was seen in religion. In 1842 out of sixty or seventy Roman Catholic priests in the island, only one was a Haitian. Many people in the country were well educated, and certainly more than equals in point of scholarship and *savoir-faire* of the rude priests imported generally from Corsica. But a feeling was current among the peasants that "colored baptism will not stick." There is no indication that the European priests, since they were well paid for their services, attacked this particular heresy. As for the élite, they derived a certain satisfaction in being served by white priests. Aside from the churchmen, however, the only white man in any place of prominence in the country was the mayor of Saint-Marc, whose father had befriended Boyer in former times.

Few visitors had kind words to say of social conditions in the Haiti of Boyer. As a Frenchman put it:

> Democracy was the rule; but what a democracy! A hodge-podge of the most heterogeneous ideas, an alliance of the most contrary principles, of American federalism with military control; the sovereignty of the people replaced by the sovereignty of a ruling clique; and finally, all the intellectual vainglory of a people young, inexperienced, and for a long time denied the legitimate manifestation of their own wishes. Added to all these inconsistencies is the antagonism of races.[61]

This antagonism was, indeed, paramount. The habitual hauteur and assumed pretensions of the lighter Haitians were a perpetual thorn in the flesh of the ambitious blacks, and thus the breach was everywhere widened and made permanent. The blacks retaliated against these distinctions by refusing to obey orders from mulattoes in office, or by petty outrages against private citizens among the colored group.

The vital lack of the country, assuming that stability is desirable, was a middle class of any sort. On the base of hundreds of thousands of peasants, illiterate, unambitious, indifferent to progress, was built

61. Lepelletier de Saint-Remy, "La République d'Haïti; ses dernières révolutions; sa situation actuelle," *Revue des Deux Mondes*, XV, No. 4 (Nov., 1845), pp. 681–682.

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an ineffective government, momentarily in the hands of colored élite. Attempting to dominate politics was a numerically small group of colored people and a still smaller group of Negroes. Although prevailingly black, the army might be, and in the later nineteenth century was continually, used by whichever group offered more. A third power, a middle class, might have balanced these antagonistic factions. Lacking such a moderating influence, Haiti was the victim of recurrent revolutionary movements.

At the time of Boyer, actual democracy would have been no safeguard, for it would have meant the supremacy of ignorance. His rule was the beginning of unfortunate days for Haiti. After the auspicious opening years, the President became an impotent onlooker as his country declined. It is instructive to compare the Haiti of Dessalines and Christophe with the Haiti of 1843, only one generation later.[62]

The Haiti of 1806 had been a beehive of activity. Soldiers, foremen, and policemen then stood over the workers with lianes to force them to labor for the benefit of their state. Production was carefully planned, an ordered hierarchy making every person in the country responsible to another higher than himself until the ruler was reached at the pinnacle. The cardinal fault of any laborer was to shirk at his task. The year 1843, on the contrary, found Haiti in a condition of quiescence which, to those who remembered the old days, resembled torpor. The central government had ceased to drive its citizens, and its half-hearted attempts at persuasion were futile. Overseers, drivers of gangs of workers, soldiers whose duty it was to enforce labor, had disappeared from the scene. Every man was his own master.

The standard of living in 1806 as in 1843 was low; but in the earlier year there had been a promise of great things to come once Haiti had rebuilt what war had destroyed. The succeeding years, however, failed to inculcate into the people a desire for any higher standard of life. Country dwellers were benighted; ignorance deepened the habit

62. Haiti has never had an accurate census, so that it is impossible even to estimate the total population of the country either in 1806 or in 1843. The figures of 380,000 and 800,000 given by some authors for the two years are mere guesses. Likewise, one can only deduce the proportion of people in the main economic and social categories; probably seventy-five per cent of the Haitians were serfs in 1806 and the same percentage peasants in 1843; the "aristocracy," including all who did not derive a living by manual labor or army service, could hardly have reached five per cent in either year; the army, house servants, day laborers in the towns, and petty businessmen would make up the other twenty per cent.

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Political history of the next seventy-two years is a complicated story, of which only enough need be told here to illuminate the evolution of caste and social distinctions. Even a short summary reveals the bewildering confusion. Of the twenty-two heads of state between 1843 and 1915 only one served out his prescribed term of office;[a] three died while serving, one was blown up with his palace, one presumably poisoned, and one hacked to pieces by a mob; one resigned. The other fourteen were deposed by revolution after incumbencies ranging in length from three months to twelve years.

The Revolution of 1843 brought back into national prominence the whole matter of color and caste. The young revolutionaries, mostly light-skinned, seem to have assumed that their group was permanently in control. With cavalier highhandedness they set about capturing the last stronghold of Negro eminence: the army. They soon found, however, that they had caught a Tartar; their attempt to rule was fatal to them and their clique.

In the Constitutional Assembly convened to make a new constitution for the country, they professed astonishingly democratic doctrines. Proclaiming that the fault of former governments had been reliance upon military power, they now proposed to make civil power paramount by allowing the common people to vote. Since up to this time the franchise had been strictly limited to army officers and anciens libres, such a radical departure as general suffrage makes no sense unless conceived as an attempt to break the power of the Negro-controlled army, for surely the élite had no confidence in the wisdom of the peasantry. Weight is given to this explanation by the paradoxical action of the revolutionaries in promoting to high army rank some of the strongest mulatto partisans of civil government.

The new constitution was an immediate failure. Most of the colored élite condemned the giving of voting rights to peasants and workers; the army chiefs, generally black and illiterate, some of them aging veterans of 1803, bitterly resented being made subservient to young, inexperienced civil officers; in fact, even the new mulatto president, Rivière-Hérard, had no conception of government other than by military dictatorship.

Not only was the constitution a failure; so was the government of the young revolutionaries. A part of their weakness lay in their

a. The presidential term varied under different constitutions; some allowed a four-year term with the right of reelection, some six years with no reelection.

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175 643 Suddenly, without warning, he reversed what had been mistaken for docile inactivity, and assumed complete personal command of the reins of office. By means of a well-organized body of secret police, [625] he inspired his own counselors with fear not only for their positions but for their lives. Although illiterate, Soulouque never signed a bill presented to him by his ministers until he was sure he knew its essential core. The hopeful "understudies" were forcibly awakened to the realization that they were hoist on their own petard.

175 643 563 669 The colored element was particularly apprehensive at Soulouque's amazing activity, for the President was clearly setting himself against their group, both in the cabinet and out. Determining clandestinely to get rid of their puppet before he became a Frankenstein's monster to destroy his creators, they fomented a new revolution. This, however, proved to be a strategic error of the first magnitude, for the President was already much stronger than they imagined. The insurrection was quashed with massacre and attendant frightfulness. In the aftermath, as Bouzon mordantly remarks, "the republic was calm—with all the tranquillity of a tomb!" By their ineptitude, the colored group had now made themselves completely insecure.

175 565 643 642 [555] In the second year of his régime Soulouque decided to imitate Dessalines by turning the state into an empire. His coronation was extremely gaudy, as well as expensive. Calling himself Emperor Faustin I, he created a peerage drawn chiefly from among his black generals—four princes, fifty-nine dukes, and numerous counts, barons, and knights. This was merely outward pomp to gratify their craving for prestige, for they had no functions to perform, nor even the necessity of Christophe's peers to pay for their regalia. As nobles they were given no responsibilities in directing economic activity nor any increased political power over districts of the empire. The Emperor's own vanity was flattered by having a peerage. He ruled as an autocrat with blatant despotism. For ten years following the coronation Haiti had to accustom itself to costly expeditions against the Dominican Republic, nearly all ending in defeat for Haiti. The outcome of these intermittent wars was neither gain nor loss of territory by either side, but only temporary rule of occupied districts. Haiti likewise had to accustom itself to sudden executions, to the shabby grandeur of court display, and to financial trickery which would not have deceived a schoolboy. While the heads of his opponents and even his loyal counselors fell, Soulouque's infantile "empire" tottered to economic ruin.

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"empire" tottered to economic ruin. Graft, default on the debt, increasing deficits, and debased currency were the order of the day, and so continued until 1859, when the accumulation of anger over the useless wars and the humiliating defeats made the Emperor so unpopular that a new and more carefully planned revolution accomplished his downfall.

Fifteen years of administration by Negro rulers had broken the political power of the colored élite. Only three light-skinned men became president thereafter until the occupation of Haiti by the American Marines in 1915; in the seventy-two years following Boyer's downfall, mulattoes ruled during only eight. The army under a black general was too powerful, a colored president too hampered by suspicion, to make the political game worth the candle. The colored élite, therefore, adapted themselves to existing conditions as best they could, controlling the business life of Haiti, filling the law offices and, because of their literacy, the secretaryships of state, and indulging in honorific cultural pursuits.

In the years after Soulouque the basic realities of Haitian life were changed hardly at all by shifting political administrations. Some of the presidents were mildly progressive, many were indifferent; still more were actually harmful; but the lives of the mass of peasants were not often touched by presidential vagaries. Politics was an affair almost wholly of townspeople, of the army, the élite, and the pseudo-élite. Revolutions, counterrevolutions, movements of reform, international tangles, financial woes, and most of the other complications to which unstable states are heir, absorbed the attention of rulers and upper-class folk who were politically inclined.

Constitutions were made by presidents and changed by their successors; the Senate passed contradictory laws in the same session if the chief executive so recommended; the courts were presided over by the president's men. Haitian law in the latter half of the nineteenth century was what the president's immediate strength and wish made it—or else it was folk custom, undisturbed by the rulers.

Never once, in the three quarters of a century after Boyer's time, did Haiti approach the high standard of production known in colonial days or in the early years of independence. The pattern of Haitian social and economic life became fixed in this seventy-five years. Haiti became a country of small-scale tillage by a peasant population, with only enough external trade to provide moderate

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V

CASTES SINCE THE AMERICAN OCCUPATION OF 1915

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IN 1915 American Marines entered Haiti. One of the major reasons for their intervention may have been economic; certainly this explanation or accusation has been frequently made by opponents of American dollar diplomacy. Nevertheless, the ground was well prepared by political incompetency in Haiti in the years preceding 1915, and the reason given to the world by American statesmen to justify the Occupation was essentially a political one: Haiti was in a state of anarchy.

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As has been abundantly shown, Haiti never had a semblance of democracy. From its beginning the country was governed either by a despot—the president, who might or might not be benevolent—or by an oligarchy. The failure of Haitian politics from 1843 onward was the inability of the titular ruler and the oligarchy to work in harmony; indeed, the oligarchy was continually divided against itself. Only three of Haiti's presidents from 1843 to 1915 were more than mediocre statesmen.[1] It is merely a question of degree, whether such phrases as "political and economic stagnation" and "social inertia" are more accurately descriptive than words like decay and degeneration.

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A brief résumé of politics between 1900 and 1915 will set the stage for a view of the Occupation in relation to the development of caste.

1. With this judgment by a foreigner Haitians may obviously disagree. In the author's opinion the presidents Geffrard (1859–67), Salomon (1879–88), and Hyppolite (1889–96) were relatively distinguished men. To Geffrard may be credited the following: increase of educational facilities; construction of much-needed public works; an attempt to form a true middle class, even by importing Negroes from the United States; reduction of the size of the army by half; healing of a sixty-year breach with the Holy See, so that Haiti might once again have approved priests; the opening of closed ports to commerce; and improvement of agricultural methods. Salomon was an educated man with European experience; his achievements were to create a national bank, establish a sound currency, retire the public debt, lower tariffs, bring in schoolteachers from France, open rural schools, bring Haiti into the International Postal Union. Hyppolite's chief triumphs were in the field of public works—much-needed buildings, bridges, docks, telephone and telegraph lines.

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175 643 642 The twentieth century began inauspiciously with a succession of dull incompetents in the presidency. General Sam's administration (1896–1902) had been distinguished only by lethargic calm. Nord Alexis (1902–8), over eighty when elected, prolonged the peace by doing nothing to disturb it; he solved his financial problems by issuing paper money, while his political "policy" involved nothing more significant than the sponsoring of festivals to celebrate Haiti's hundred years of independence. The mild revolution which displaced him substituted a president more puerile than oppressive, Antoine Simon (1908–11), who is best revealed in a terse comment by a Haitian author: "When he passed by on a street or through a public square, everyone, foreigners as well as Haitians, must stand still, even stop smoking, and respectfully salute the Head of State. At any instant, without reason, the functionaries of the capital might be called to the Palace to endure his interminable and insipid discourses."[2] A revolution cut short his tedious régime.

Within the next four years six presidents rose and fell. Their administrations were worse than ephemeral; indeed, they hardly deserve the name of governments. Not one of the six had a happy time in office; the first was blown up with his palace, the second is generally thought to have been poisoned, the next three were quickly deposed by revolutions, and the last, after massacring his imprisoned political enemies, was horribly cut into small bits by an infuriated mob. Anarchy then ensued.

175 652 648 For years Haitian presidents had staved off financial collapse by heavy borrowing abroad. United States financial interests were involved in the Bank of Haiti and in a railroad company, while the American government, through its Monroe Doctrine, was disturbed by French and German threats to collect their Haitian debts by force. When President Guillaume Sam[3] was hacked to pieces by the mob, the United States landed Marines from gunboats which were conveniently just outside the harbor of Port-au-Prince. Beginning on July 28, 1915, the Occupation lasted for nineteen years.

128 648 With the question of America's justification in the matter of occupying Haiti this book cannot pretend to deal. As with most large matters of policy, convincing arguments can be offered on both sides. The important fact for this study is that the presence of white

2. J.-C. Dorsainvil, *Manuel d'Histoire d'Haïti*, p. 338.
3. Not to be confused with Simon Sam, who had ruled twenty years earlier.

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Since it was an entrenched interest, however, no responsible statesman had dared to threaten its hold. The Marines swept it out of existence, undertaking to substitute for it a trained constabulary of only 2,000 men who should combine routine military tasks with police duty in the scattered towns. Results were immediately apparent: the weighty incubus of soldiers' wages was lifted from the treasury; thousands of men were deprived of sinecures and put back into productive economic activities; the constant threat of armed revolution was removed; better order was kept by 2,000 trained men in trim uniform than by twelve times that number of ragged loafers who called themselves soldiers; and since the army was no longer the great steppingstone to political office, the élite felt more secure from assault by ambitious but uneducated army men. From 1843 to 1915 the élite had endured many lower-caste presidents because these were able to control the army; now the army had disappeared.

The Marines did much that was of indisputable benefit to Haiti. This was acknowledged even by the most vocal patriots who soon began to campaign for an end of the Occupation. Where there had been no real work in public health, Americans now built hospitals, established clinics, cleaned up the sources of many diseases, laid down sewage systems, gave the towns pure water. In 1915 there were only three automobiles in the country, and no roads for them to travel; the Americans built many miles of paved roads. In 1915 there had been only one wharf, two short stretches of railroad, two lighthouses, one electric plant; the Americans undertook electrification, telephone systems, the construction of administration buildings, and other public conveniences. Whether in such visible matters or in the obscurer realms of currency, banking, and budgets hardly a phase of daily life was left untouched. And judged by the standards of civilization the Marines improved what they touched.

But rancor against the Americans began early and continued to the bitter end in 1934. The pride of all Haitians was deeply wounded by the Occupation. For 111 years they had governed themselves and had assumed themselves to be a sovereign nation; the Marines patroling the countryside were vivid reminders that Haiti had never been independent except by sufferance, and that white men were once more overseeing the destinies of colored and Negro men. Nevertheless, the reasons proclaimed for opposing the Occupation were not those of hurt vanity. Some of those given were entirely

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plausible, such as the race prejudice displayed by many individual Marines;[4] the unnecessary slaughter in the suppression of *caco* (guerrilla) rebellions in the North; the continued holding of offices (and salaries) by Americans too impatient to train Haitians, as by the Agreement of 1915 they were supposed to do; the fostering rather than elimination of military psychology among the people by the presence of armed Marines.

The campaign against the Occupation was generally on the highest level of patriotism, for it threw out one variation after another on the same theme: We Haitians are not being allowed to govern ourselves. Some realists knew that their hurt national pride was accompanied by disappointment that certain salaries were not reaching Haitian pockets, certain prestige of office not redounding to the credit of Haitian men. What if the real reason for opposition were not the openly avowed one? The Marines must go! Order had been restored and government reëstablished. It was patent that any administration which could effect the withdrawal would be immensely popular: it was equally patent that if the Americans left the country, the benefits of their efficiency and material improvement would remain as a tangible boon to Haiti.

President Sténio Vincent, elected in 1930 after a campaign in which the Americans did not interfere, began the negotiations with Washington. With President Hoover he made headway toward reforms, but President Roosevelt's attitude was more actively cooperative. In 1934 Vincent had a series of conferences with the President of the United States; the latter, in pursuit of his good-neighbor policy, persuaded the American Senate to order the Occupation at an end and turn over without cost to Haiti many buildings, supplies, and equipment used by the Marines. Vincent personally benefited from the withdrawal of 1934. He called himself Haiti's "second Liberator,"[5] and made the anniversary of the American departure a national holiday. Indirectly the élite also benefited for now, entrenched in office, they could govern without white supervision. The material equipment was there to be enjoyed by the whole people at no further expense to them.

4. The United States government in the early days had sent Marines from the Southern States to Haiti, on the theory that they would, from long acquaintance with Negroes, know how to "handle" them. This stupid blunder was shortly rectified.

5. Dessalines had, of course, been the first.

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175 The Occupation had had other far-reaching consequences. It had
648 removed from the Constitution an article which had endured from
642 the very first—the prohibition against ownership of land by white
423 people. Americans argued that since Haiti's greatest potential source
563 of wealth was agricultural (sugar and coffee in particular), new methods were needed if rehabilitation were to occur. Only foreign whites had both the necessary wealth and the requisite agricultural knowledge: therefore, whites must be attracted into the country by an opportunity to establish plantations. Although the Senate of Haiti protested violently against this reversal of tradition, which struck at the people's long pride in their complete ownership of the land, the Americans yielded only on the point of requiring five years' residence of the white landlord in the country. The influx of foreign whites has not been large, but in the Plaine du Nord and Port-au-Prince the white "colonies" are considerably larger now than in 1914.

175 Up to the present moment the white element in Haiti has not
648 exerted any noticeable pressure on the government. Its mere pres-
563 ence, however, is bound to be a restraining influence on politicians, for most of the whites are Americans, and the government at Washington may not always follow a good-neighbor policy. With the clannishness so usual in white colonists living among darker people, the Americans in Haiti have their private clubs and their closed social set. For the first time since 1804 the élite are socially not the highest-ranking persons in the country.

175 The physical presence of several hundred white Marines for nine-
648 teen years had also one unplanned but inevitable result: an increase in
563 the amount of white blood in the population. For many decades
144 numerous élite had rested comfortably beneath their light skins, knowing that only they, with their greater mobility in the world, had any real chance to sustain a white strain. The Occupation, however, brought white men in contact with black women; there was a steady average of 2,000 white Marines in the country for two
[554] decades. The light skin of resulting offspring suggested to many the possibility of a climb up the social ladder now that the most difficult rung had already been achieved. No figures are available on the number of children born in Haiti between 1915 and 1934 of white fathers, but it was a perceptible influx in the lower class.

175 Haitian businessmen enjoyed a greater economic prosperity during
458 the Occupation than they had ever known before. It is commonly

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to appoint, curés to the vacant parishes. His independence of action could not fail to give offense to Church authorities. One of his first appointees was a black ex-slave, Félix, who had been a drum major in the native army. Félix was made curé in the important town of Saint-Marc.

The constitution of his empire (May, 1805) indicates that Dessalines did not intend to make himself head of the Church, but rather planned a complete separation of Church and State. Article 50 reads: "The law admits no dominant religion"; while the next article grants freedom to all cults and refuses state support to any denomination or minister. No attack was made, therefore, upon Catholicism, yet the disestablishment of that Church was a serious blow to its prestige. Not in the specific provisions regarding religion was the Church most weakened, but rather in the "liberality" of articles dealing with actions upon which the Church had taken a firm moral stand. Thus Article 14 declared that "marriage is an act purely civil and authorized by the government," while Article 15 permits divorce by the state. Early laws of the empire still further undermined the position of Church doctrine. Illegitimate children were granted the same legal rights as legitimate ones—a generous provision which removed one of the strong reasons for marriage; separation of husband and wife except by divorce was forbidden, and this prohibition practically encouraged the divorce disapproved by the Church; finally, the grounds upon which divorce might be allowed were broader than those existing anywhere else in the Western World at the time: mutual consent, application from one party to the marriage, or simple allegation of incompatibility of temperament or character.

From the promulgation of this constitution in 1805 and for the next fifty-five years, Haiti was in open schism from the Roman Catholic Church. The Holy See refused to recognize either the Haitian state or the provisions of its constitution, and it declined to allow priests to enter the country. Certain Haitian presidents were friendly enough to Catholicism, and others were openly desirous of reëstablishing a state religion, but the breach once made was not healed by mere good wishes. The longer the schism endured, the farther the people grew away from the doctrines and practices of a religion in which they had never been firmly grounded. At the moment of independence, when all minds were more open to new

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ideas than in later years, the habits of regular attention to religious duties might have been fixed; by 1860 it was too late. Religion existed during those years, but it was a strange gallimaufry of Catholicism and folk belief.

On the whole, the rulers of young Haiti were tolerant of the Catholic Church even to the point of advancing its interests, in so far as these might benefit the state. Their pronouncements and actions, nevertheless, were not those of ardent personal believers. Pétion's constitution of the republic in 1806 once more established Catholicism as the official Church. What it gave with one hand, however, it took away with the other. Thus:

Art. 35. The Catholic, apostolic, and Roman religion being that of all Haitians, is the religion of the state. It and its ministers will be protected.

Art. 36. The law assigns to each minister of that religion the extent of his spiritual administration. These ministers may not, under any pretext, form a body within the state.

Art. 37. If in the course of time other religions are introduced, no person shall be hindered, so long as he conforms to the laws, in following the cult he has chosen.

The Catholic, then, is the state religion, but only because the Haitians have heretofore been nominal Catholics. It occupies a position of practical fact which it would lose if by the introduction of other cults Haitians should be drawn away from it. Its ministers will be carefully watched to see that they do not, as a group, try to exert political pressure. And what freedom of action is possible to a church whose ecclesiastical parishes can be limited or extended in size by the civil legislature?

Pétion no more fought religion than he fought any other conventional institution approved by civilized people; but he did little to foster it. He received certain Wesleyan missionaries with considerable hospitality, remarking that "education increases the dignity of mankind." He appeased the good Catholics by repealing the law concerning the rights of illegitimate children, substituting for it a more moderate French rule.[4] Likewise, he invited the Catholic Church to participate in the education of Haitian youth.

4. The French practice allowed an illegitimate child recognized before a wedding equal rights of inheritance with legitimate offspring, while giving only quarter rights to a child recognized after marriage.

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Christophe had a great deal more to say about religion than any of the other early Haitian rulers. In a speech following the promulgation of his constitution, after severe censure of the government of Dessalines, he said:

> It is necessary to raise again the dignity of religion, for weakened morals leave young people open to the licenses of their age. Liberty has been assailed by traitors, enemies of their fellow citizens, and sold to our cruelest enemies. It is assured to you now, have no doubt! Shortly you will see these vicious men and their criminal efforts vanish like clouds.
>
> Public education, after religion and liberty the most precious benefit mankind enjoys, will be reanimated and sustained by morality; it will again be held in honor and reverence amongst us. Divorce, that traitor among customs, is rigorously prohibited and proscribed forever.[5]

Like Pétion, Christophe made the Catholic Church official, but he indicated the dictatorial path he intended to follow by adding that no ecclesiastical decree or law might become effective without the consent of the President.[6] He completely overturned the law of Dessalines concerning illegitimate children; his decree deprived such offspring of any claims of inheritance whatever.[7] In a country where practically no one had been legally married such a ruling was severe, but Christophe hoped that his severity would force his subjects into wedlock, and this the Catholic Church was bound to approve.

Making the Church official did not strengthen its hold upon the people. In 1814 (seven years after he had promised "to raise again the dignity of religion") the kingdom was served by only three priests, one of whom Christophe had named archbishop. The King was preoccupied with form, and having created a nobility he needed a church to lend dignity to his realm. Consequently in 1811 he reorganized the clergy in his kingdom, establishing an archiepiscopal see and three bishoprics. The reorganization, except for the archbishop, remained a paper plan because the Pope refused to coöperate by giving the schismatic church his approval.

All the early rulers seem to have been rather innocent in their dealings with Rome. They felt, apparently, that as heads of state they had but to express a desire in order to have His Holiness ap-

5. This speech, made on February 18, 1807, is cited in Thomas Madiou, *Histoire d'Haïti* (Port-au-Prince, 1848), II, 354–355.
6. See the law of March 18, 1807.
7. Law of March 25, 1807.

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175 178 64 slave system are not likely to assume it again; and the aristocrats, ever intent upon forgetting their African forebears, would certainly not turn to the Dark Continent for political inspiration.

175 642 701 643 Although the revolution had brought to the fore men of military experience and even genius, it had driven out or killed every single person of experience in civil government. The affranchis of the old régime had been denied political rights long before 1791; by 1804 few could have had any memory of active participation in government.[1] Toussaint was dead. The only authority of any significance was military. Consequently the new state was built upon army control and directed by army officers. Dessalines as commander in chief took the title of governor-general, later of emperor, but was in reality a military ruler. Fearful as he was of a new French invasion, he set his generals over the districts, organized his people as an army ready for immediate mobilization, and ruled as dictator.

175 642 This was all the Haitians had as political background: a military dictatorship. The Founding Fathers of Haiti, if so they might be called, had almost nothing to work with, nothing to build upon: neither a Magna Carta of the Blacks, nor any precedent of an independent Negro state anywhere in this white man's world; neither heritage of local responsibility and political debate to sow the seeds of democracy, nor any example of self-government in the American tropics to offer a pattern[2]—many of the known forms of government were a practical impossibility for the Haitians because of their need of continued defense against foreign enemies, their slave heritage, their inexperience in self-government, their complete lack of a middle class.

175 668 Hardly one tenth of the people in any case was capable of giving detailed thought to the form which government should take. The mass of ex-slaves had been fighting only *against* slavery, against the hated white rulers, not *for* democracy or any other abstraction. Their freedom achieved, they would not be the ones to make decisions. [642] All political choices would be made by the generals, by men of property and position, by the few whose persistent ambition made them stand out from the masses.

1. Such participation in French colonial politics would have been before the restrictive laws of 1771.

2. It must be recalled that Haiti was the second free country to be established in the Western Hemisphere, and that Liberia, in Africa, was still far in the future.

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Immediately a division of political opinion was evident, one which was to persist throughout the century. No one denied the inevitability in 1804 of making Dessalines the head of state: he was the victorious commander, clearly the most powerful man in Haiti. The division of opinion arose over the manner in which he should rule, whether as military dictator, or as a responsible president. Dessalines settled the matter peremptorily—if only for the time being—by asserting hir. self as a dictator.

The issue did not die with his decision, however, for it had deep roots. Supporting Dessalines wholeheartedly was the group of generals who were all Negroes, all ex-slaves, all practically illiterate. The three most influential of these blacks were Christophe, later to succeed his general; Chanlette, and Boisrond-Tonnère. Those who preferred a government in which the president shared power with a legislature of important men were, on the contrary, almost all affranchis of the old régime, therefore the most cultured and educated men in the country. Most of them were mulattoes or at least of a lighter complexion than the Negroes, although of course some blacks adhered to their position. The leaders of this group were Pétion, Boyer, Inginac, and Gérin. This division of opinion went back even into the decade preceding independence, when the island, free of slavery, was still technically under the rule of France, and the ex-slave Toussaint had to fight and conquer the mulatto leader Rigaud before he could establish his rule as dictator.

For a brief moment after independence, all differences were reconciled, since all had been united in a common cause against the enemy. Dessalines was then commanding in the Artibonite Valley, and Christophe in the North; two of Rigaud's former lieutenants, Pétion and Geffrard, commanded in the West and South. Apparently there was genuine respect among these men for each other. Dessalines, for example, with evident sincerity calls his colleague Pétion "that man of upright heart." The unity was short-lived, however. Not only was it evident that Dessalines meant to rule like an African despot-chief, taking advice only when he liked it; it was even more plain that through his cruelty, impetuosity, and crudeness he was bent on isolating Haiti from all contacts with the culture and polish of the outer world. Pétion and his group looked on with pained disgust as he indulged his violence against the whites who had hopefully remained in the country; the general's bloody procession throughout

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the land, leaving a trail of misery and death, was an augury of what to expect from a tyrant. They opposed his plan to destroy all coastal towns and move the people inland where, protected by their mountains, they would be immune to foreign attack and foreign ideas. They resented their loss of property by state expropriation, and could not fail to be shocked by the grim exultation of Boisrond-Tonnère: "To draw up the act of independence, we used the skin of a white man for parchment, his skull for an inkstand, his blood for ink, and a bayonet for pen!"[3]

Even without such cogent objections to Dessalines the mulattoes would have opposed his dictatorship, for as intellectuals and as social élite they wanted a real share in the government. For this they had agitated since before 1791, and it would be a grim irony if after fourteen years of intermittent conflict the successful expulsion of whites should be followed by a continued exclusion of mulattoes from the government. It would be a worse irony to throw off the white yoke only to take on a black one. When in 1805 Dessalines made himself emperor they asked for the creation of a nobility, thinking to share the rule with him; but the Emperor's curt "*Moi seul je suis noble*" dashed this hope. Although detailed proof is lacking, it is generally accepted in Haiti that the conspiracies against the Emperor's life began with this intransigent statement.

Here, then, was the issue which in half a dozen varying forms was to split political opinion for decades: rule by a single tyrant vs. rule by the cultured class. It even made two nations of one between the years 1806 and 1820.

When Dessalines was assassinated, a Constituent Assembly was summoned to draw up a new constitution and select a new ruler. The mulattoes were in control of the Assembly which under Pétion's skilful guidance sat at the mulatto stronghold, Port-au-Prince, and there drew up a constitution assuring the limitation of the president's power by a Senate, and requiring election and reëlection of the president instead of permitting him life tenure. This achieved, the Assembly dutifully elected the black general Christophe president of Haiti. However, belonging as he did to Dessalines' school of thought —unrestricted rule by a strong man—he indignantly refused to be bound by such a constitution; when the Assembly, instead of yielding

3. This statement is cited, with evident distaste, by Thomas Madiou, *Histoire d'Haïti*, III, 114.

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to his demands for revision and for his selection as president for life, retained the constitution they had written and chose Pétion president in his stead, the rupture was instant and complete.

Dictator as against restricted president, strong man as against class or group rule, Negro against mulatto, army against civil government, executive against legislature, North against South—these are the phases of the subsequent dichotomy in Haitian politics.

A good case can easily be made for the advocates of force in Haitian government, particularly in its early days. For years the majority of men had lost the habit of steady work on the land; a strong hand was needed to reëstablish in the countryside that economic order without which liberty shrivels. The people had become accustomed to taking orders from their military leaders, and these from their commanding officer. Those, moreover, were times of crisis, when France might suddenly descend again upon her former colony: few crises can be dealt with by debating societies. Looking back on the course of Haitian history, one may point out also that the country prospered under the dictatorships of Toussaint, Dessalines, and Christophe as it never did under the limited presidencies.[4]

In 1806, therefore, the aristocratic party got its wish, although only at the price of splitting the country in two. They established a government with a president of their own and a Senate filled with their representatives. The earliest legislation naturally enough favored their own landholding group. When prosperity did not result, Pétion began to recommend to the Senate a division of the land. More and more, although the representative form was preserved, Pétion ruled as a dictator. He was mild enough not to arouse antagonism; as is always the case when freedom of speech is curbed and summary legislation required, the plea of crisis was used to justify extraordinary measures.

The legislative party was firmly in the saddle by 1820 when Boyer reunited North and South, and shared his power with the Senate.

4. The argument for dictatorship is familiar to the modern world. A defense of "totalitarianism," published in 1816 by authority of Christophe (then King Henry I), is amusingly like certain European utterances of the nineteen-thirties: "The King has the sweet satisfaction of seeing that the cultivators [who were forced to work on the land whether they wanted to or not], being everywhere regularly paid [though the sum might be tiny], are praising the freedom they enjoy." And again: "Hayti chose a kingdom in order to shun forever that chaos, that confusion and perpetual clashing, which result from those monstrous associations known under the name of *popular bodies*." Anon., *Haytian Papers* (1816), pp. 109, 113.

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175 642 643 Since he was president for twenty-five years (normal ones, as things go in Haiti), it is worth while to examine the functioning of the kind of government the upper class favored.

175 642 643 692 President Boyer's education and outlook were wholly French. He had formed his views of government principally upon French models, yet when he became head of state he could not forget his own military career. He said repeatedly that he wished to supersede the military by the civil power, but somehow never got around to it. The country was full of black generals, and it would have been difficult to retire them, primarily because they were black. He established courts to insure the rights of man, but since his newborn judiciary lacked the prestige to command respect, interpretation of the law came from the President—until before long he was himself the law. With a logic characteristic of the French, he tried to make the whole administration of the country orderly and tidy by codifying laws, laying out spheres of governmental departments, and properly ticketing matters in general. He had to be the sole judge of the intention and operation of statutes, however, and if necessary modify the nature of an act to suit his view of the public need. His honest and generally upright character perhaps made his enormous prerogatives conducive to the public good; but Boyer was a dictator in spite of his Senate, since when he found a law working badly he simply turned it from its normal course and gave it a quite contrary effect.

[646] [661] As the years of his long rule proceeded, he took more power to himself. When his Senate would not pass bills as he proposed them, he waited until they adjourned and then either neglected to execute their laws, or instructed the government printing office to change the wording. He clearly regarded the legislature as a necessary nuisance, to be kept as a sop to the élite and to preserve the appearance of republicanism before the world. Representatives from the various communes were recommended by the President, his nomination amounting almost always to election.[5]

800 Boyer was overthrown by the Revolution of 1843, by all odds the

[643] 5. The task of governing the whole island was obviously heavier than governing a fraction of it, so Boyer may have felt justified in his departures from strict constitutionality. He was always an indefatigable worker, whose intentions were uniformly laudable. He tried to rule alone, as had his illustrious predecessors. The hitch came because he was not of their calibre. He was worthy, virtuous—and mediocre. He would probably have made an excellent mayor of a French provincial town.

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Boyer was overthrown by the Revolution of 1843, by all odds the

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most important of Haitian upheavals. Since its effects were to be felt for the next seventy years in the extinction of representative government and the eclipse of the élite as political rulers, it is worthy of special attention. Paradoxically, it was a revolution fomented by the élite themselves. Its background and outcome reveal the power in word, and the impotence in deed, of this group by 1843.

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The constitution of 1816, devised by Pétion's henchmen, had granted the president initiative in all laws except those concerning taxation. After the agreement of 1825 with France,[6] however, Boyer, hard pressed by the need of paying the indemnity each year, began to restrict the number of officials, diminish their salaries, and veto all projects favorable to the development of public instruction and improvement which might cause further expenditure. By temperament he was an autocrat.[7] Every valuable measure must come from him alone; whatever another person proposed he would find a thousand reasons to discard. Sarcastic and vain, he did not know how to smooth ruffled feelings or make conflicting groups reconcile their differences. His personal weaknesses of character alienated the sympathies of many once-devoted officials.

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During his long presidency Boyer also systematically ignored the younger generation, men who admired the efforts of Pétion, ardent reformers who wished to devote their energies to the improvement of Haiti. The military career had no attraction for them: the higher ranks, alone bringing sufficient salary for a congenial way of life, were too few and one could achieve them only with difficulty, for since 1825 advancement had been submitted to rigorous rules. On the other hand, the paths of administration were severely guarded by those admirable great functionaries left over from the government of Pétion—men like Inginac and Imbert. But age had slowed their activity, and still Boyer kept them on. The younger generation mocked this "gerontocracy" and supported the parliamentary opposition.

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The youth of the élite class continued to go to France for their education, returning to Haiti to take part in the lively political discussions which made one of their chief occupations. During the first decade of Boyer's administration they generally supported him, for

6. By which France recognized the independence of Haiti in return for the payment of a large annual indemnity.

7. "In everything, he wishes to dominate," Pétion had said of him.

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175 he seemed to be leading the country to progressive action; about
665 1830, however, a group better educated and more ambitious than
664 their predecessors arose. Nourished on ideas acquired in France, they
871 were shocked on their return by the miseries and governmental inaction which prevailed in Haiti. True, when Boyer pressed them to suggest constructive measures of reform they had little to suggest. Like many other critics they were better at tearing down than at building up.

175 By the constitution of 1816 they had the right of free speech and
642 press, and made use of it to publish journals of criticism—*Le Phare*, *Le Télégraphe*, *La Feuille de Commerce*. Their sustained criticism kept
204 alive the parliamentary opposition and gave it a focus; they were at
208 least partially responsible for the Revolution of 1843. In spite of their
665 diatribes, Boyer did not suppress these newspapers. If he had done so it is possible the Revolution might have come sooner. Not every dictator-president would permit such boldness as the following paragraph which appeared in 1843 in *Le Patriote*, an adversary of Boyer's own journal *Le Temps:*

> Let one look well at the things which are happening among us and then say whether, considering our first steps along the path, our progress has not been constantly slowed up now for some time, and whether this does not lead to a state of things in our country in which the most vital part of our civilization is struck by an immobility, almost a paralysis. Haiti is stationary, is retrograde: we need no other proof of it than this frightful uncertainty about the future which so deeply disturbs all serious minds and sincere patriots.

175 In 1838 Hérard Dumesle, president of the Chamber and a leader of
665 the opposition, drew up and secured the passage of an "Address to
646 the President of the Republic," which expressed certain just ideas of
643 progress and pointed out that failure to achieve it was due to the mistakes of the administration. It was a bitterly critical and some-
664 times passionate document. Boyer was intensely angry and proceeded to violate the constitution: relying on the majority always at his disposal in the Chamber, he excluded from among the deputies those most hostile to his government.[8] But at the election of 1842 the communes of Les Cayes, Aquin, and Jérémie reëlected the expelled representatives, so confirming their criticism of the President.

8. Hérard Dumesle, Laudun, Lartigue, and David Saint-Preux.

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ary, 1843, Boyer realized that it was futile to oppose the revolutionaries and departed for exile, going by way of Jamaica to Paris.

Now came the test of the revolutionary leaders.[11] The state was in their hands; their own representative, Rivière Hérard, was the new president. They proceeded to concoct a ridiculously naïve constitution which by granting a popular vote alienated large bodies of their mulatto support; to insult the black army leaders; and to allow the defeat of Haitian forces by Dominican revolutionaries, thus losing two thirds of the island's area. Every act weakened the party favoring representative government. Within a year Rivière was ousted and a black general was ruling Haiti with a rod of iron. The Revolution of 1843 from which so much was expected had by its very success ruined the parliamentarians, for with power in their hands they showed themselves utterly inept.

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A succession of black generals now came to the presidency. When Faustin Soulouque became president in 1847, the fourth Negro within four years, and made himself emperor two years later, Haiti found herself once more back at the strong-man principle. The élite were out of office, relegated to inferiority in all phases of political life.

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In the middle of the nineteenth century the groups upholding the conflicting principles in politics became organized political parties. Those favoring parliamentary rule called themselves Liberals; those believing in the sole rule of a strong dictator were called Nationalists. But by no stretch of the imagination could the Liberal party be considered democratic. The noble principles expressed in the French Declaration of the Rights of Man and the American Declaration of Independence were uncongenial to Haiti. One of the prime tenets of the Liberals, indeed, was that men were not created equal; rather that certain men (the élite) were clearly the superiors of others. Liberty

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11. The revolution was almost wholly an affair of the élite caste. The mulatto Boyer was deposed, and the mulatto Rivière Hérard took his place. If anyone thought of the peasants, it was only to use them to manipulate and manoeuvre the "outs" into office. Boyer's secretary-general, deposed along with the President, appealed to his countrymen against their accusation of treason against him, saying "My last wishes will be for the prosperity of Haiti and the regeneration of the African caste, to which I have consecrated myself wholeheartedly for forty years, without ever thinking of my own interests." (Joseph Balthasar Inginac, *Message à ses compatriotes, et principalement à ceux qui ont dirigé les affaires populaires de la république depuis la fin de janvier dernier* [Port-au-Prince, March 18, 1843], p. 6). Yet if these are more than hopeful words, they refer only to the distribution of the land which made peasants of the "African caste," and to Inginac's pamphlets on how to raise coffee and other products—which none of the peasants could read.

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Pétion and Boyer had

suavity enough to rule constitutionally with a Senate which, since class interests were being served by the executive, did not curb their virtual dictatorships. Later presidents had more difficulty. Geffrard, for example, elected as a Liberal after the fall of Soulouque's grim empire, had made parliamentary government a battle cry of his campaign. In office, however, he was continually at loggerheads with his Senate, until he exercised his presidential privilege of dissolving it; in the end a revolution overthrew the Liberal parliamentarian because he had become a dictator. So with his successor Salnave (1867–69), likewise a Liberal, who almost immediately upon inauguration found it impossible to work with such a group of talkers. So once more with Nissage-Saget (1870–74), who followed Salnave: a professed believer in legislative responsibility, he refused to yield to the legislature on any important matter. A black Nationalist succeeded for two years, ruling despotically. Then came the last of the Liberal presidents, Boisrond-Canal (1876–79). This man was apparently determined to allow his legislature its full constitutional rights. As a result Haiti had more talk in the capital, and less action, than in almost any régime up to that time; then, as Montague says, "convinced that the constitutional régime was a failure, Haiti's most scrupulous president resigned in disgust."[13]

The Liberal party virtually disappeared from the scene in 1883, after two abortive coups by their leader of the moment, Boyer Bazelais. The first occurred in 1879 when the retiring President, Boisrond-Canal, gave Haiti one of her very rare honest elections, resulting in the choice of the Nationalist candidate Salomon. Bazelais and his men forsook their professed principles, rising in arms to seize power. They were suppressed. Four years later when the moment again seemed auspicious Bazelais led another revolution, which the President so effectively crushed that the leader himself was killed. The leaderless Liberals were no longer effective competitors in presidential politics. From that time until the American Occupation, the élite were out of power. One president only during those thirty-five years was a mulatto: Tancrède Auguste, one of the weakest rulers in Haitian history. He died, presumably poisoned, after eight months of office.

The era from 1883 to 1915 was Haiti's worst, politically. Revo-

13. Ludwell L. Montague, *Haiti and the United States, 1714–1938* (Durham, 1940), p. 18.

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The era from 1883 to 1915 was Haiti's worst, politically. Revo-

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lution succeeded revolution; the country sank deep into graft and scandal; foreign powers made Haiti debase herself before them. Some of the élite, backed by foreign merchants resident in the country, went so far as to urge annexation by the United States rather than endure continued disorder in economics and degradation in social life. They felt matters had come to such a pass that only so radical a change could clean the Augean stables. This was the period of a succession of political pamphlets[14] written by élite thinkers to set forth the necessary steps of reform. Every president was a black autocrat, holding power by his control over the masses. If an occasional one was more than mediocre (Hyppolite, for example), his good qualities were sure to be more than offset by the ignorant boors (such as Nord Alexis) who followed him.

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True, even the most incompetent of the Negro presidents was obliged to employ a few élite, for literacy was necessary in the foreign office if nowhere else. The aristocrats were impotent, however, for Haitian problems had tremendously increased at the very period when they were losing control of government policy. Reforms were imperative, as every member of the élite knew; but no black president saw the need, or seeing it, had the vaguest idea how to proceed toward effecting them. Beyond the shameful disgrace of Haiti's position in the world of independent nations, the thoughtful could glimpse the anarchy which must inevitably result from continued ineffectiveness.

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Reforms were not forthcoming. Rather, anarchy came, bringing international complications in its wake. The American Marines occupied the country. An era was ended.

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It had been a strange journey in political ideas from the time of Pétion and Christophe to that of the Occupation. The early leaders seemed to envision triumphs for Haiti in a world of great powers, and to see themselves as men with a mission. After Boyer the vision dimmed. We have Soulouque, whose tinsel empire was mere stage setting for the act of a neighborhood bully; the tyrant Domingue; the senile Nord Alexis; the utterly incompetent fly-by-nights in the decade before the Occupation. Even Geffrard the reformer, prob-

14. Among the most lucid of these were: Démesvar Delorme, *La Misère au sein des richesses* (1873); Edmond Paul, *Les Causes de nos malheurs* (1889); Léonidas Laventure, *Haïti: le danger de la patrie* (1893); Alcius Charmant, *Haïti, vivra-t-elle?* (1905); and Auguste Magloire, *L'Erreur révolutionnaire et notre état social* (1909).

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175 665 208 648 whites patrolling the streets seems to have given reality to criticism which before then would have been academic. The élite were back again in the political forum. Unreflecting patriotism urged the immediate withdrawal of the Marines, but a considerable number of the legislature saw that it would be years before they left. The problem, then, they saw variously: some wished to be eloquent spokesmen for the patriotic anti-whites and did their best to embarrass the Occupation; some, feeling that the Americans were benefiting the country, tried to make things move smoothly; while others, seeing a fertile field for gain, tried to ingratiate themselves with the American authorities.

175 643 642 648 662 The twenty years between 1915 and 1934 heard many eloquent, impassioned speeches, not all of them coming to the same conclusions. The élite were divided in most issues raised by the Occupation, so that the old neat dichotomy between élite and army no longer prevailed. The President, Dartiguenave (1915–22), was for the first time since 1879 a Southerner and a mulatto; yet in 1922 when he was a candidate for reëlection it was Southern élite votes which defeated him. Executive, legislature, and judiciary all had just enough power under the Occupation to make subtle manoeuvres, and all three branches of the government displayed a real genius for the political game. They often succeeded in putting the onus of an unpopular act upon the Americans, and in taking the credit for popular measures with which they had had little to do. They prodded and pricked all the weaknesses in the logic of the American State Department. They forced numerous concessions. If at times they seem to have been overclever, playing the game of politics merely for an opportunity to display their skill, at other times many of them showed a deep understanding of realities which had to be faced.

175 648 666 642 The Occupation, ordered by that high prophet of democracy, Woodrow Wilson, professed its determination to give Haiti her first opportunity to be democratic. Yet the Marines really dictated the choice both of Dartiguenave in 1915 and of Borno in 1922 and 1926. The constitution of 1918 was prepared in Washington; it was submitted to a plebiscite, but the farcical vote—69,337 for and 335 against—was clearly the result of electioneering by the Marines. The presidents of Haiti ruled with executive councils, subject to Ameri-

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can "advice and approval," rather than with the legislature subject to popular control. Even under such restrictions the politically minded found ways of exerting pressure on the Marine authorities.

Out of the darkest days of military subjection by a foreign power came a changed order of politics in the country. The practically unbroken line of dull incompetents who had come into the presidency ended; instead of ignorant army leaders, educated men were once more in office; instead of Northern Negroes, élites of Port-au-Prince; instead of benighted martinets bewildered by world affairs, men who, if not great statesmen, at least had minds capable of understanding Haiti's relation to international economics and politics.

The élite were back in power. In the mind of every friend of Haiti arose the question whether the events between 1879 and 1915 had taught them lessons which would make their return to responsibility productive of great things for the country. Because of the abnormal situation resulting from the Occupation, the world depression, and the briefness of their new ascendancy, one cannot yet speak with assurance. Nevertheless, there are few encouraging signs. Political office is still regarded by most candidates in terms of their own advancement rather than service to Haiti. Very little has been done to extend the base of voting by developing local responsibility and education among the masses. Élite youths still receive a classical education, still disdain manual labor, still cherish the ideal of a graceful life of ease. The president still rules as an autocrat supported by the gendarmerie—substitute for the army of former days. One can see no decrease in social distinctions or in the disdain of the élite for peasant people; on the contrary, there has even been an increase of this feeling because the Occupation (through its Agricultural Service particularly) seemed to open paths of development to the peasants. Social antagonism, not social responsibility, still underlies political life.[20]

To every one of these strictures there is a plausible reply. It is no light matter to unsettle the minds of nine tenths of a population by education, to cause an economic revolution by improving agricultural techniques, to admit to political life a people unaccustomed to

20. Dr. Jean Price-Mars, in *La Vocation de l'élite* (Port-au-Prince, 1919), *passim*, especially pp. 51 ff., urges the élite to accept their responsibilities rather than rest upon the debilitating assurance of their innate superiority.

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178 65 it. Moreover, the Haitian budget is in the neighborhood of seven million dollars, for which sum not much in the way of great improvement for three million people can be expected. The task of regenerating Haiti calls for self-sacrificing genius—at present the élite hardly qualify either as self-denying servants of the public or as geniuses.

175 643 642 648 241 Haitian affairs during the 1930's were under the direction of President Sténio Vincent, an able man to whose credit much can be said. He devoted himself to his task with assiduity, talking face to face with the peasants in Créole, urging them to assist in reforestation and to use wisdom in crop rotation. He settled serious disputes with the neighboring Dominican Republic in amicable fashion. It was he who carried on the delicate and successful negotiations with President Roosevelt to give Haiti control of her own affairs once more. In coffee culture, assistance to trade, financial matters, and other economic details, he often proceeded expertly, particularly in view of the world depression which began as he assumed office. On the other hand, Vincent made the legislature his servant rather than a partner. He was a dictator (fortunately a benevolent one) who changed the constitution by highhanded methods in order to gain his own reëlection. His régime rested upon his alliance with the efficient Garde d'Haïti. There were few signs of democracy or of respect for civil liberties, as Americans understand those terms, in Vincent's eleven years.

175 643 The spectator has a feeling that he has seen all this before, when for example Geffrard was elected to assure parliamentary government, only to become an effectively benevolent dictator as soon as the legislature opposed him. Geffrard was on the whole a good president, as Vincent was; but the former did not succeed in setting Haiti upon the path of economic and social security, and one hardly dared expect it of his modern counterpart.

175 643 648 In April, 1941, Élie Lescot, former Haitian Minister to the United States, was elected as the thirtieth president of the republic. Vincent had refused to call a plebiscite to approve an extension of his presidential term for an additional five years, as he had done in 1935 near the end of the six-year term to which he was elected in 1930. Lescot had begun his presidency with many advantages, chiefly the friendly support of his predecessor, his acquaintance with United States officials, and a recent negotiated pact by which American aid will

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be given to Haiti for vast rubber plantings."[11] Opposition to Lescot comes chiefly from those who consider him too friendly with the Dominicans who killed hundreds of Haitian workers in 1937, Lescot having figured prominently in negotiations that led to the Dominican government's agreement to pay indemnities to Haiti for the slaughter.

Reviewing the whole course of Haitian history, the field of politics seems to have marshaled itself behind a few regularities. In every case there have been voices raised to protest, yet the ruling clique, whatever its grouping, has effectively supported these characteristic political customs:

1. Complete dominance of political life by the president. Strong men seem to be necessary to rule ignorant masses. Even the revolutions precipitated by parties campaigning for parliamentarianism have, when successful, become governments by the president. This concentration of power in one man's hands makes the next revolution possible, for it is easier to overthrow one man than to eliminate a party based upon wide suffrage and diffused responsibility.

2. The inferior position of cabinet ministers. These have resembled neither European nor American secretaries of state in their responsibilities, but have been little more than clerks appointed by the president to serve as heads of a bureau. The treasurer-general, for example, during most of Haiti's history has merely received the moneys, while the president disbursed them. The secretary-general has neither originated nor conducted the details of public policy. Often as not, the minister has made a convenient whipping boy when the president has got himself involved in internal or foreign complications: by demanding the minister's resignation the president remained unscathed.

3. The unimportance of the legislature. It has made useful patron-

11. The European War, threatening the supply of rubber coming to the United States from British Malaya and the Netherlands East Indies, has made the American government seek new sources. The Department of Agriculture established an experimental station and breeding gardens for rubber plants in Haiti, and the results were so successful that extensive areas were planted with rubber trees. Haiti and the United States in May, 1942, reached a long-term agreement for "the development of agriculture and economy"; the projects embraced under the agreement include not only rubber but the further development of Haiti's banana plantations, the planting of oil crops, drug plants, spices, fiber plants, the stimulation of handicraft industries, and the development of forestry resources peculiar to the tropics. A further extension of an additional $500,000 in credits will be made for use on highways, irrigation projects, and to provide transportation facilities for the areas to be planted to rubber trees.

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3. The unimportance of the legislature. It
232 has made THE HAITIAN PEOPLE useful patron

646 age for the president to dispense, and has preserved the semblance of
642 republican government; but hardly half a dozen legislative sessions in all Haitian history have contributed seminal ideas in politics or initiated true reforms. How could they, indeed, when the president was consistently a dictator of policy?

666 4. The undemocratic nature of the vote. Senators are chosen by
642 the representatives, and the two groups together have generally elected the president, when he did not come to power by revolution. The only chance people have had to vote has been for local officials and representatives. In these cases, the vote has been limited to the elite and the army, with the president's henchmen counting the ballots. Since the Occupation there have been plebiscites on constitutional changes, the people having the right to vote Yes or No.

692 5. The subservience of the courts to the president. They have been
643 filled with president's men, generally astute enough to consult presi-
642 dential wishes before handing down a decision. Foreign merchants soon learned that they could expect little "justice" from the courts if their own cause conflicted with special Haitian interests. Foreign diplomats likewise learned that in crises the courts could involve the simplest issue in such verbal complexity that months of patience would be necessary to unwind the red tape.

641 6. The pliability of "constitutional rights." Freedom of speech and
661 of the press has been notably lacking, although scurrilous attacks on
642 the administration's enemies have often been permitted. Legislators have been expelled. Graft has flourished. In 1833, for example, two representatives were expelled from the House "for systematically opposing the measures of the executive, and persisting in a demand for a statement of public expenditures." A century later a senator was expelled for almost the same reasons.

701 7. Militarism. Only in this respect is any real change apparent since
178 the American Occupation. The army was always large up to 1915,
642 and so constituted an economic drain as well as a political menace.
669 Generals had great power: they ruled each department and each arrondissement, were subject only to the president, and were at the bottom of every revolutionary movement.[22] Since the Occupation

[162] [701] 22. In 1842, when the population was still less than a million, there were in the district governments 9 generals, 63 colonels, 48 lieutenant colonels, 9 captains, 1 lieutenant, and 28 medical officers; and in the standing army 33 colonels, 95 lieutenant colonels, 825 captains, 654 lieutenants, 577 sublieutenants and ensigns, 6,815 noncommissioned officers, and 25 medical officers. The army had 28,000 soldiers and cost about $600,000 a year. See John Candler, *Brief Notices of Hayti*, pp. 86 ff.

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numbers in the army have been radically reduced; yet in that very fact there is the possibility for the only armed persons in Haiti, the present Garde d'Haïti, to effect political coups. But at least the budget is not strained by the salaries of thousands of unnecessary soldiers, as was true in pre-Occupation days.

8. The separation of the masses from government. By providing a minimum of local government, but that fairly effective, the national government has been able to keep the peasants out of all but revolutionary politics. Rural communities have ordinarily got along well enough without formal government, so that the history of Haitian political thought and the analysis of Haitian political forms would treat of affairs interesting to only a fraction of the population.

It need hardly be repeated, after a reflection upon these apparent permanencies of political life, that Haiti is not a democracy.

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exceeding the jurisdiction of the local juges, these juries to be named by the doyen and his colleagues. It was a dubious reform, often a worthless privilege; at times it was definitely harmful, for no matter how explicit the law, mere technicalities in a long, involved trial could be completely befuddling to an illiterate juror. Brown tells the tale of a certain foreman of the jury who asked a juror his opinion of a defendant's innocence; the juror replied that he could not write, whereas "you have written it all down. Let us know what you have done."[3] Innocence might easily be convicted by this system, and guilt escape. The addition of a jury to the court was even useless in many instances, for the language of the lawyers was French, and that of the jurors almost certain to be Créole. Boyer's attempt to graft English court practice upon the French system already functioning in Haiti was certainly not happy; the jury system shortly disappeared.

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Complicated forms are not for the peasant. He knew a soldier and a soldier's function in the countryside, but not the relation of the arrondissement to the national government; the juge de paix was understandable, but not the procedure of the civil courts at department capitals. The national government and its structure were remote, although the president's name might be familiar. Haiti was really organized from the top down rather than from the bottom up. The powers of the early presidents were arbitrary: they could not only order changes in the framework of any part of government, but might also shift at will the personnel.

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Carl Becker remarks: "In 1791, the French began their spectacular feat in constitution making. Between 1791 and 1875 Taine counts thirteen French constitutions adopted in relatively rapid succession. I can find only twelve, but maybe Taine is right. It doesn't really matter. The point is that for facility, speed, and endurance in constitution making, France holds the record. Yet other nations also ran."[4] Haiti was one of them: in fact the record is properly hers, although Professor Becker does not mention the little Caribbean state. In the nineteenth century Haiti lived under fifteen constitutions, to which she has added at least two more in the twentieth century. It is not always easy to say when a constitution is new: its author may

3. Jonathan Brown, *The History and Present Condition of St. Domingo*, II, 271–272.
4. "Afterthoughts on Constitutions," *The Yale Review*, XXVII, No. 3 (Spring, 1938), 432.

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114 consider it novel when it changes little but detail; and some of Haiti's
175 seventeen documents were too short-lived to be significant. Haiti
642 shows her Frenchness in this constitution making, this love of being
171 logical and having the details all written down in proper order.

To try to analyze the content of so many documents would be a
175 work of supererogation.[5] A brief comment upon each, however, will improve one's acquaintance with the mind of Haitian statesmen.

175 1801. Toussaint L'Ouverture's constitution, laying the framework
642 of his venture as director of the colony while still acknowledging its
466 relationship to France. In it he announced himself governor-general for life with the right to name his successor, thereby becoming the forerunner of the strong-man principle in politics. The most important part of this constitution was its detailed organization of the forced-labor system.

175 1805. Dessalines' constitution establishing the empire. In many
642 respects it did not differ from Toussaint's previous document, for the
563 same military organization was preserved, and the same system of forced labor; otherwise, there was little structure of government. One article was included which was to appear in every other constitution of Haiti up to 1918: "No white man shall set foot on this territory as master or as landowner."[6] In other respects there were sagacious provisions which did not endure. For example, the generic name of "blacks" was adopted for all Haitians, of whatever color.
175 The Emperor was trying thus to forestall the dissensions which
642 inevitably must result from the growth of social classes based on skin
[463] color. Another important provision was that every citizen who was not an ordinary cultivator must learn and practice some mechanical art. This was not merely a thrust at the aristocratic pretensions of the old affranchis, but also an endeavor to make Haiti industrious and self-sufficient. Except in the North, where Dessalines' deputy Christophe kept the requirement, the article was honored only in the breach. The social situation was touched at one other point: "No one is worthy of being a Haitian who is not a good father, a good son, a good husband, and a good soldier." Parents were forbidden to
[428] disinherit their children. Although, as has been shown, the Emperor

5. Such an analysis was made by Louis-Joseph Janvier, *Les Constitutions d'Haïti, 1801–85* (Paris, 1886).

6. He had made this declaration first on April 28, 1804; at that time the words "No white man" read "No colonist nor European."

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175 642 put little stress upon strictly legal marriage, he did try to foster family ties and to strengthen family life.

1806. Pétion's first constitution, drawn up with his fellow mulattoes. Taking his model from the United States constitution, he established a republic with a president and a legislature, although the president of Haiti had greater relative powers than the president of the United States. He might be reëlected, but was not to be a dictator.

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1807. Christophe's reply to the mulattoes, establishing the "state" of Haiti which should (he hoped) overwhelm the "republic" of Haiti. His political and social systems were in few respects different from those of Toussaint and Dessalines.

1811. Christophe's second constitution, establishing his kingdom and creating a nobility, but otherwise maintaining the forced-labor system.

1816. Pétion's second constitution, the longest-lived in Haitian history. Having been several times reëlected president he now adopted the principle of a life presidency, with the right of the incumbent to name his successor. The legislature and forms of a representative republic were retained.

1843. The completely unrealistic constitution of the young revolutionaries who succeeded in overthrowing Boyer. The fight of the anti-Boyeristes had been for effective parliamentary government; to that end they provided for the direct election of the president by the people, a democratic vote, the exercise of legislative power by the Chamber of Representatives and the Senate, and the subordination of military to civil authority. Such democracy was too radical for either élite or army to endure, and this constitution was shortly superseded.

1846. Riché's return (in most respects) to the constitution of 1816. He kept the principle that the president should be elected, not appointed for life by his predecessor; but the election was by the combined Senate and Chamber, rather than by democratic vote of the people.

1849. Soulouque's constitution, founding his personal and gaudy Second Empire.

1859. Geffrard's return to the Pétion constitution of 1816, as revised by Riché in 1846, with a few details added to meet changes in social conditions in the last decade.

1867. Salnave's modifications of the constitution of 1859. The parliamentarians were in control once more, and inserted the require-

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ment that two thirds of the members of either Chamber must be present before a law could be voted—a stipulation making it possible for any clique to hold up legislation by absenting itself.

1874. The constitution of Domingue who, having defeated the Liberals, promulgated a constitution "profoundly modifying" the language of the 1867 document. It legally concentrated power in the hands of the president—where, indeed, it had always been in spite of constitutional declarations.

1879. Salomon's first constitution, which professed to be a re-examination of Haitian institutions, but was actually not different in essentials from the document of 1846. The line from Pétion to Riché to Salomon and his successors was the main one from which deviations, such as those of Soulouque, occurred.

1886. Salomon's second constitution, a mild revision of his first.

1889. Hyppolite, the new president, felt it necessary to have a new constitution, although like the constitution of 1886 this was little more than a revision of that of 1879. Under the 1889 document Haiti continued to function, more and more haltingly, up to the time of the American Occupation.

1918. The constitution drawn up in Washington[7] and forced through in Haiti by a farcical plebiscite. Its most debated provision was the elimination of the prohibition against ownership of land by foreign whites, thus ending the one common point in all previous constitutions since 1805. For the rest, it changed little of the actual structure of Haitian government, but provided a great number of unaccustomed democratic rights: freedom of assembly, trial by jury in political cases, direct election of senators, submission of amendments to popular vote, freedom of the press.

1927. Although this is considered merely a revision of the 1918 constitution, its changes were actually more noteworthy than many expected by the so-called new constitutions. Thirteen amendments were carried by popular vote, again so overwhelming as to be ridiculous, restricting many of the democratic liberties granted in 1918 which had proved embarrassing both to President Borno and

7. Franklin D. Roosevelt, in his campaign for the vice-presidency of the United States in 1920, claimed that he had written most of this constitution while he was Woodrow Wilson's assistant-secretary of the navy. (See the *New York Times*, August 19, 1920.) The constitution was approved in Haiti by a vote of 69,337 to 335.

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to the Americans who ruled Haiti through his office. This constitution once more increased the power of the president. 642 [641]

1932. Vincent's constitution, professing to be quite different from the two in effect during the Occupation, but actually closely resembling the 1927 revision with its concentration of power in executive hands. In 1935 an important amendment was added, making it possible for the president to be reëlected. [643]

Despite this welter of constitutions, the essential framework of Haitian government has consisted, except for brief interruptions, of a president, a legislature, and courts. The term of the presidency has varied from four to seven years (in the early days, for life) with the privilege of reëlection being now forbidden, now granted. Two presidents who tried to extend their terms, Salnave and Salomon, were deposed by revolutions for their temerity. Their distinction of being among the few to serve out the allotted term was thus marred by an ignominious end. 642 643

Regularly the president was obligated to "maintain internal peace" —a requirement few heads of state have been able to carry out, since internal peace has been most elusive. To aid him in his task he has been given wide powers: he commands the army (always large until 1915; every president except one between 1804 and 1915 was a general) and the navy (never more than a few ill-conditioned vessels, but these important in the general roadless condition of the country); most constitutions also gave him the right to issue necessary proclamations in order to deal with special crises. He "watches over" tribunals by means of appointed commissioners; by this arrangement he may obviously exert pressure for favorable judgments in cases which interest him. 643 [701] [706] [716] [792]

The one body which might conceivably check the president, namely, the legislature, has generally been composed of the president's men, for the Senate has usually been elected by the lower house from a list of candidates proposed by the president, while the representatives would hardly dare defy the man who controlled the army (which presided over such elections) and could dissolve the legislature. By most of the constitutions the president proposed to the legislature all laws except those concerning taxation; even here, since he directed the receipt and issue of public moneys, he was not really limited. Over foreign affairs the executive had effective control by 643 [646] [646]

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not find herself constantly embroiled with European states and American financial interests. The Haitian debt was funded, and a financial adviser remained in the country even after the Occupation came to an end. It is expected that by 1943 the last debt will be paid; the financial adviser, however, withdrew in 1941. Since the Occupation, although the republic has been free to manage her own affairs, she has consulted frequently with the State Department in Washington.

Nineteen years of occupation ended the century of Haitian isolation. The Americans built roads, conducted health campaigns, made their presence felt even in remote hamlets and valleys. American authors, political, romantic, and sensational, discovered the Antillean republic. Steamship companies stopped their cruises for a few hours at Cap-Haïtien to allow tourists to visit the Citadel, and at Port-au-Prince to see the sights of the capital. Every Haitian now realizes that there is a world outside.

Whatever crises have arisen in Haitian affairs, certain problems have persisted. For whom do they constitute a source of worry? Since the government has always been a dictatorship, limited or absolute, subject to no party control, the incumbents of office have never had the experience of being constantly reminded by their opponents of the misery or daily worries of the population. After a hundred years the people have learned that relief is not to be expected from politicians. Occasionally a dramatic revolutionary leader has persuaded some of the people that the officials in power were responsible for their distress, and so worked up a following; yet even when such movements succeeded, the masses never benefited. To most governments of the past century Haiti's problem has been only one: to frustrate insurrection. There is evidence that recent administrations have busied themselves assiduously with the country's internal problems, although none of them has been adequately solved. The élite, at least as a group, do not feel any apparent responsibility for the maladjustments, nor obligation to effect the necessary reforms. A few patriots, and those almost without exception not in office, know what ails the country and say so; a smaller number propose reasonable solutions. The problems remain. Of these the three outstanding are overpopulation with all its accompanying ills, health, and education.

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NOTES

CHAPTER II

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The period between 1789 and 1803 may be summarized as follows:

1789–1791. Struggle for precedence between whites and free colored people, with the balance in favor of the whites. [565]

1791–1793. The slave insurrection, with consequent anarchy, and futile attempts of French commissioners to restore order. Both whites and colored people pushed into the background. [669] [563]

1793–1796. Invasion of the colony by English and Spanish; rise of the mulatto general Rigaud and the black general Toussaint. [648]

1796–1799. Consolidation of power by Toussaint; defeat and expulsion of Rigaud; emigration of whites. [643]

1799–1802. Toussaint in full power as governor-general.

1802–1803. Leclerc's expedition, with its initial successes and ultimate failure. Final achievement of Haitian independence under Dessalines and Christophe. [642]

PART III

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Various efforts were made by American abolitionists working with Haitian presidents to colonize freed American Negro slaves in Haiti in the period before the Civil War.[1] All these projects came to unfortunate ends, some even to grimly tragic ones. During Boyer's time about 13,000 American Negroes went to Haiti, the government assigning to each family a portion of land upon its arrival. Very shortly most of those who could afford it returned to this country, and within ten years hardly one was still living upon the land. An American writer, Hunt, says that during his seventeen years in Haiti (before 1860) he had known of but 13 Negroes from America who had been moderately successful; of these, 7 were merchants or traders, 4 mechanics, and 2 lawyers; and all were mulattoes. Five others were barely independent, and all the rest were day laborers or worse. In spite of this, Hunt planned another aided migration of American Negroes to Haiti. Warning them not to expect too much in the way of improvements in agriculture, he adds a significant paragraph: "Should the immigrant obtain quiet possession of unoccupied lands, and begin to use the plough instead of the hoe, his new methods of culture would be likely to draw upon him the jealousy and ill-will of his neighbors. For when new ways are too new to be accepted as an example, they are very apt to be felt and resented as a rebuke. More than one of Boyer's old immigrants have told me that they were obliged to give up agriculture and take to trading in towns, on account of annoyances of this sort. They found their fences down, or their water let off, of a morning; or evidences that cattle had been fed on their grounds over night; or the neighboring idlers, of which there are many, had stolen all their plantains and sweet potatoes, fit for the market. I do not mean to say that these Haytian cultivators are worse than any other rude people. On the contrary, I

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1. An excellent description of these projects is found in L. L. Montague, *Haiti and the United States, 1714–1938* (Durham, 1940), chap. IV.